CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE

I.S.B.N.

THESES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

National Library of Canada
Collections Development Branch

Canadian Theses on
Microfiche Service

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction du développement des collections

Service des thèses canadiennes
sur microfiche

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

NL-339 (r. 82/08)

Canada

0-315-19356-5

(8)

National Library of Canada
Canadian Theses Division
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Division des thèses canadiennes

67264

PERMISSION TO MICROFILM — AUTORISATION DE MICROFILMER

- Please print or type — Écrire en lettres moulées ou dactylographier

Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur
LORENE EVERETT TURNER

Date of Birth — Date de naissance NOVEMBER 27, 1941	Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance CANADA

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe
8711 - 120 ST.
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
T6G 1X4

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse
TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED WORLD OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

University — Université
UNIVERSITY of ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée
DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade 1984	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse DR. T. AOKI

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

Date March 29/84	Signature Lorene Everett Turner

NL-91 (4/77)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED WORLD OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

by

Ⓒ LORENE EVERETT TURNER

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
Spring, 1984

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR	LORENE EVERETT TURNER
TITLE OF THESIS	TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED WORLD OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED Spring, 1984

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(SIGNED) Lorene Everett Turner

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

8711 - 120 St.
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 1X4

DATED March 9 1984

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED WORLD OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN submitted by LORENE EVERETT TURNER in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in SECONDARY EDUCATION.

....

Supervisor

....

....

K. G. Jacknicke

Jessie A. Roderick

External Examiner

Date March 9, 1984

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to discover what it is like to be a beginning teacher of young children. Three University of Alberta early childhood education graduates in their first year of teaching were the focus of the study. In an endeavor to gain some insight into the lives of the beginning teachers of early childhood education, the researcher sought to portray the experiences of these teachers as well as the meaning they were giving to them.

A qualitative research approach was used with the researcher involved in the school setting of each of the three teachers on a weekly basis as a participant observer and interviewer. From the field notes and tape-recorded interviews, descriptive portrayals of each teacher's first year experiences were written by the researcher and validated by the teachers as being "their story, the way it really happened."

The researcher then used the factual descriptive portrayals of each teacher's experiences, as the stepping off points for exploring the meaning each teacher gave to her experiences. As the researcher interpreted and wrote of these experiences, further questions arose that were explored jointly with the teachers. As themes began to emerge from the teachers' experiences, the researcher focused on these in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning teachers gave to them. Through reflecting on the meaning of the teachers' experiences, and reading in related literature, the researcher developed seven themes which are submitted as insights into what beginning teachers experience as they move into their first position as an early childhood teacher. The themes portrayed are: The Beginning Teacher as Stranger: from Student to Teacher; I'm a Real Teacher At Last; Someone Cares; Struggle for Control; Uncertainty Can Lead to Distress; They Need Help, But What is Help?' and Experiencing Time Within the World of Doing.

The study concludes with the researcher's reflections on the nature of the study, the research approach used, and what the study has meant to her as a teacher educator.

Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to the successful completion of this study.

First, I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. Ted Aoki for his sensitive guidance and encouragement throughout my doctoral studies. Through questioning many of my taken-for-granted assumptions about living and teaching, he made it possible for me to see the world of education in a new way and to write about it with greater clarity.

I also appreciate and wish to thank Dr. Myer Horowitz and Dr. Patricia McFetridge for their encouragement and support, as well as their continued belief in me as a teacher educator.

To Dr. Jessie Roderick of the University of Maryland goes my special thanks for her thoughtful comments and her shared enthusiasm for revealing the meaning of educational experiences.

Dr. Ken Jacknicke's perceptive questions and comments were always thought-provoking and appreciated.

My heartfelt thanks to Joy, Caroline and Patti, without whose cooperation and time the study would have been impossible. Each of these beginning teachers enriched my life in many ways as they shared their experiences with me. Each expressed the desire that other beginning teachers would benefit from the study. I appreciate the trust they placed in me and hope I have told their story well so others can indeed gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a beginning teacher.

I also extend my thanks to the principals and staff at Notikewin, Autumn Leaf and Alnwick for accepting me into their schools for the year. Pseudonyms have been used so as not disclose actual people and locations. You know who you are and I thank you. I appreciate the cooperation of the many Edmonton Public School Board staff who assisted me in locating first year teachers, as well as welcomed me to many of the special activities and workshops arranged for first-year teachers.

Throughout the study my family has been most supportive and helpful. A special thanks goes to my husband Art, who admirably carried on the roles of mother and father during my frequent absences. I also appreciated his continued willingness to read, discuss and challenge my interpretations of the lived worlds of Joy, Caroline and Patti.

My thanks to Toscha, our four-year-old daughter, who delightfully and effectively pulled me into her life world whenever she felt I was becoming too involved in the lived world of "my" beginning teachers.

I appreciate the ongoing support of my mother and father over the years, and they were always willing to help out when Toscha needed some surrogate mothering.

A special thank you to Dr. Muriel Affleck for proof-reading the entire study, and finally, thank you to Lu Ziola whose expert typing and understanding of word processing turned my penciled jottings into a professional looking manuscript.

Table of Contents

Chapter Page

I. INTRODUCTION 1

A. The Context of the Study 1

B. Purposes of the Study 2

C. Research Questions 3

D. Organization of the Study 5

II. RESEARCH ORIENTATION AND PROCEDURE 6

A. Related Literature and Research 6

B. Orientation and Procedure 12

Qualitative Research 12

Preliminary Phase 15

The Role of the Researcher 17

Research Process 20

III. UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE WORLD OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS 31

A. Introduction 31

B. JOY 31

Becoming A Teacher 31

Early Experiences in Joy's Life 31

Falling Into Education 32

Experiencing University 33

Joy's Beliefs About Education 35

The Experience of Getting A Job 37

Getting Oriented 39

The Experience of Getting Ready for School 39

The Experience of Meeting the Children 41

Experiencing Notikewin Community and School 44

Experiencing the First Week 48

Exhaustion 48

Lack of Familiarity with Grade Two Curriculum and Materials 49

Lack of Adequate Supplies 50

Inappropriate Materials 50

Lack of Time 51
Individual Differences 51
Classroom Management 52
Becoming Established 53
Relationships With Children 53
Relationships With Parents 61
Transforming the Environment into a Human Situation 63
Experiencing Support 70
New Beginnings 77
A Smaller Class for Half Days 77
A Smaller Class for Full Days 79
A New Year: January, 1983 80
Really Taking Off 82
What About Next Year 84
C. CAROLINE 86
Becoming a Teacher 86
A Life-long Dream 86
Experiencing University 87
Caroline's Beliefs in Education 89
A Kindergarten of My Own! 92
Getting Oriented 93
The Experience of Getting Ready for School 93
Experiencing the First Day 95
Experiencing Autumn Leaf Community and School 98
Feeling at Home at Autumn Leaf 101
Becoming Established 104
Experiencing a Half-Time Position 104
Conflicting Personal and Professional Responsibilities 109
Caring for Children or *"How Many Children Have You?"* 111
Getting Things Perfect 114
Making a Difference 116

        Experiencing Support 118
    Another Beginning 123
        Getting Bogged Down 131
        Off and Away 134
    What About Next Year 137
D. PATTI 137
    Becoming a Teacher 137
        Teaching: A Life-Long Dream 137
        Patti's Beliefs About Education 141
        I Did It On My Own! 144
    Getting Started 145
        Preparing for the First Week 145
        Experiencing the Beginning 147
        Reflections on the First Few Days 151
        Experiencing Alnwick Community and School 155
    Becoming Established 159
        Experiencing Relationships 159
        Experiencing Support 174
        Balancing Her Professional and Personal Life 177
    I Want to Teach Next Year 180
IV. THEMES EMERGING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS 184
A. Introduction 184
B. The Beginning Teacher as Stranger: from Student to Teacher 185
C. "I'm a Real Teacher At Last" 188
D. Someone Cares 192
E. Struggle for Control 195
F. Uncertainty Can Lead to Distress 201
G. They Need Help, But What is Help? 205
H. Experiencing Time Within the World of Doing 217
V. SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS 226

A. Summary 226
B. Reflections on the Study 228
    The Research Topic 228
    The Research Approach 230
C. Reflections on What the Study Meant to Me 234
    As a Person 234
    As a Teacher Educator 236
    As a Researcher 242
BIBLIOGRAPHY 244

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Context of the Study

"What is it really like the first day of school - the first few weeks of school, indeed the first year?" Having worked with senior undergraduate early childhood education students for a number of years, I have frequently been asked this question. As a teacher educator I have often asked myself, "How do our graduates experience those first few days, weeks?" I have my memories of what it was like for me, and I have listened as others shared their recollections. What is it that makes this time in one's life stand out so clearly years later? Would it be possible for me to gain an understanding of this experience so I could help graduating students enter the profession with increased self-confidence, assurance and a reflective attitude?

While a survey I conducted in 1977-78 of early childhood graduates from the University of Alberta provided some highlights of the beginning teacher's world, I was unable to uncover the meaning they gave to their experiences. Two of the findings did indicate that most found themselves "turning to other teachers for support and advice, " and that the majority of those replying rated their overall job satisfaction as "high". However, I was still left with many unanswered questions. For instance, did the support of other teachers encourage them to try out their own ideas and develop their own teaching style, or was it support to "do it my way because I have done it this way for thirty years and I know it works?" What contributed to "high job satisfaction?" Was it finally "being on one's own, " experiencing rewarding interactions with children, a feeling of power over a situation, or some combination of these? What was the meaning the teachers gave to these experiences? Clearly a questionnaire could not uncover it.

I found in the literature a number of similar survey and questionnaire studies that pointed to specific problems beginning teachers experienced or attitudes they held. Many of these studies were "one shot" inquiries where beginning teachers were asked to respond to specific questions near the beginning, or perhaps near the end, of their first year. The few studies that asked for responses at several points throughout the first year indicated changing perspectives as the year progressed. It seemed clear that if I were to capture what it is like that first year I must be in touch with teachers at various times throughout the year, and must also explore the meaning they were giving to their experiences.

Felder (1979) did a study of beginning teachers, disclosing how teacher concerns and coping skills changed over the first nine weeks, but the reader was able to get only a glimpse at the meaning individual teachers gave to these general concerns.

Although I had done a survey and read some literature, I felt I still did not understand what it was like to be a beginning teacher of young children. I came to the realization that if I were going to understand what it was like, I needed to put myself into the situation, not as a twenty-year veteran of the profession, but as a neophyte experiencing what it was like. While I could not eliminate my own past, it did seem possible to share in the daily life of teachers who were just beginning to teach and come to an understanding of their experiences.

B. Purposes of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to portray the reality of becoming a teacher as experienced by early childhood education graduates. It was anticipated that to some extent each teacher's experience would be unique because of the person she[1] was and the situation she found herself in. The study focussed on each teacher's perception of what she experienced, and the researcher's task was to search for deeper insight into what this experience had meant to each of the teachers.

So readers may share in what it was like to be a beginning teacher, thick descriptive portrayals of selected teachers' experiences throughout the year are provided. As the researcher described these experiences, emerging themes were identified and interpreted for underlying meanings.

A further purpose of the study was to explore a research approach that would enable the researcher to disclose sensitively the lived world of the beginning teacher. While ethnographic methods seemed appropriate for gathering data about the daily experiences of the teachers, the resulting descriptive portrayals illustrated only the factual, observable world. An important feature of the study was to penetrate into the world of meaning the teachers gave to their experiences, therefore, it was important to find suitable ways to probe into this underlying level, revealing, interpreting and reflecting upon the meaning.

---

[1] The three teachers in the study were female, as are most early childhood educators. Hence, the female gender will be used throughout the study when referring to teacher.

C. Research Questions

The overriding research question that guided this study was "What is it like to be a beginning teacher of young children?"

Further questions were posed to guide and focus the investigation. However, the strength of the study comes from allowing and encouraging the participants to speak of matters that were significant to them. Although topics were introduced at times through posing open ended questions, the researcher attempted to uncover the meanings that participants gave to a situation by encouraging the teachers to recollect and talk about their experiences. As a participant observer in the teachers' classrooms, the researcher recorded ongoing activities, teacher and child comments and behavior, noting areas to explore later with the teacher. For example, if the teacher seemed unusually happy, or upset, or had reacted to an incident in an atypical fashion, this often became the starting point for a discussion. As the researcher became more sensitive to each of the three teachers, quite often even subtle nuances and statements would indicate that a teacher might be giving particular meaning to an experience and that it could be important to explore it further. Throughout the study, the researcher attempted to remain open to letting the teachers speak for themselves.

The following questions provided the initial focus for the study and were used mainly to gather background information on each teacher and serve as entry points for discussions. While the actual questions varied depending on the circumstances under which they were asked, the areas below were explored with each of the three teachers:

1. Preparation for teaching
    - What led you to choose a profession in education?
    - What formal and informal education do you have prior to teaching? (courses, volunteer work, et cetera)
    - What preparations did you engage in prior to the commencement of school?
    - What do you feel is important in educating young children?

2. Nature of teaching appointment
    - What is your teaching appointment? (location, size of school, et cetera)
    - What are your teaching responsibilities?
    - What has been most helpful as you started your new position?
3. Early stages of teaching
    - What is a typical day like? (When do you arrive, what are your out-of-class responsibilities, how late do you stay?)
    - What have you felt best about today, this week, so far?
    - Have there been any unexpected occurrences?
    - What has influenced your becoming established as a teacher?
4. General feelings about teaching
    - How would you decribe your ideal teacher of young children?
    - What do you feel are the most important considerations in working with young children?
    - How well prepared did you feel prior to, during initial stages of, and part way through the term? (asked throughout the year)

As highlights began to emerge from the observations and interviews, they were explored in depth during future sessions. For example, one teacher had frequently referred to the large number of students she was expected to work with, so her feelings about this expectation became the focus of the next discussion. The researcher tried to pose questions that would get at the meaning the teacher gave to the situation. The following kinds of questions were used: "What is it like having thirty children in your class? Are there ways you feel the problems could be alleviated? What would it mean to you if the principal took the ten best students for a split grade two / three class?

The second focus of this study came as the researcher struggled to make sense of what the teachers experienced. This often meant recollecting seemingly insignificant experiences or comments that had occurred early in the study, and co-searching with the teacher for the meaning she gave it or how it related to more current concerns or feelings. Through continually questioning, discussing and interpreting the teachers' experiences, certain themes emerged that point to what it means to be a beginning teacher. At this point the researcher both explored the themes with the teachers and interpreted the themes in terms of the researcher's theoretical understanding of the themes.

D. Organization of the Study

Chapter One has provided the context in which the study was conducted and why it was important for the researcher to explore the world of the beginning teacher. Chapter Two reviews some of the studies that have looked at beginning teachers and shows how the present study differs from them. The qualitative research approach is explored as a suitable way of gaining a deeper understanding of a human situation. Even though the ethnographic method is used, the study attempts to go beyond the thick descriptions of the life world of the three beginning teachers by seeking the meaning these teachers gave to their experiences. Following chapter three, which is primarily a portrayal of the three teachers lived world throughout their first year of teaching, chapter four develops themes that, for the researcher, seem essential in order to understand what is meant by the teachers' experiences. Chapter five will provide a summary of some reflections on the study, and what the study has meant to the researcher as a teacher educator.

II. RESEARCH ORIENTATION AND PROCEDURE

In the first section of this chapter, the researcher will discuss some of the literature and studies pertaining to beginning teachers. Section B will explore the suitability of a qualitative research approach to the present study, and describe the research process followed in this study.

A. Related Literature and Research

The literature dealing with beginning teaching falls roughly into four categories: personal accounts of a teacher's first year, articles offering advice to beginning teachers, studies utilizing extensive surveys and questionnaires (Collins, 1969; Bond and Smith, 1967; Southwell, 1970; Tisher, 1979; Edmonds, 1979) and those that focus on a few teachers in specific situations (Eddy, 1969; Ryan, 1970, 1980; Applegate, 1977; Newberry, 1978; Felder, 1979; Hawke, 1980).

While the survey and questionnaire studies have been able to report general trends and experiences of large numbers of beginning teachers, most lack a sensitivity to the meaning of these experiences for the individual teachers involved. In an attempt to discover the meaning individuals placed on their first year experiences, a few researchers have recently combined observation and open-ended interviews with questionnaires, while others have relied completely on qualitative methods involving participant observations, in-depth interviewing and informal contacts. Although many of the studies had a different focus, all attempted to provide a clearer picture of the nature of a new teacher's entry into the profession.

The results of the following studies are based primarily on questionnaires, usually administered on one occasion during the new teacher's first year.

Students into Teachers (Collins, 1969) was the result of three research projects in Scotland and England where over 2000 first year teachers had responded to a variety of questionnaires. The findings indicated that many first teaching positions are taken due to geographical considerations rather than the nature of the assignment, that young colleagues were most helpful during initial stages, that older teachers often felt threatened by the probationers, and that there were wide variations in time spent in preparation, marking, and teaching responsibilities. Areas most problematic were discipline/class management, coping with backward children and relationships with older staff. In the United States a survey of almost 200 new teachers by Bond and Smith (1967) indicated major problems for beginning teachers were not knowing what was expected, teaching reading, classroom management/control, dealing with parents and getting to know fellow staff members. They conclude their study by stating,"In a profession as important and demanding as teaching children, it seems inconceivable that beginning staff members should be treated so casually. Southwell (1970) looked specifically at orientation of beginning teachers and recommended much more involvement of experienced teachers with beginners in initial interviews, in continuous contact from the signing of their contract to commencement of the school year, in providing assistance in preparation for first day, and as being part of three member committees to work with new teachers throughout the first year.

Results from a national survey of Australia's beginning teachers in the mid-seventies led Tisher (1979) and his research team to comment on three features they found to be significant. First, it appeared that the treatment of new teachers was quite cavalier, with less than forty percent of them being involved in any special orientation activities, which they attributed in part to " the fact that some senior colleagues have forgotten what it's like to be a new teacher" (p. 9). Secondly, while most guidance was provided by senior colleagues, rarely was there an opportunity for new teachers to share their ideas with senior staff. Third, they found that the new teacher's perception of the value of induction activities was determined largely by the quality of interpersonal relationships among teachers and between the new and the experienced teachers. Tisher recommended that further studies be conducted involving teachers as collaborators to investigate these areas in more depth.

A national survey of Canadian teachers in their first year conducted by Edmonds and Bessai (1979) found that while generally most of the first year teachers were satisfied with their entry into teaching, areas most frequently cited as dissatisfactions were heavy workloads, lack of time, discipline problems, lack of help and unsuitable university training. Edmonds recommended increased pastoral responsibility by school boards and the introduction of cooperative work-study programs where universities, school boards and teacher federations could jointly plan and implement programs that would "integrate the student's academic study work experience with cooperating employer organizations." (p. 62)

The following group of studies employing several research methodologies explored the induction of new teachers into the field.

Becoming a Teacher (Eddy, 1969) is based on weekly, tape-recorded reports by twenty-two beginning teachers in slum schools. The "hidden agenda" Eddy seems to be addressing is "how beginning teachers are indoctrinated into the establishment (school system) and thus perpetuate an inappropriate school system on children in slum schools." She poignantly illustrates how the educational bureaucracy, including administrators and fellow teachers, carefully molds the beginning teacher to "fit" into the existing educational system and how helpless are teachers (especially new ones), children and parents to effect any significant change.

In *Don't Smile Until Christmas*, Ryan (1970) speaks of the dissatisfactions new teachers experience when they are unable to transform education courses into practical survival kits for the classroom. This is often reinforced by experienced colleagues who, unable to live up to ideals acquired at university, are quick to condemn the "impractical nature of the ivory tower propaganda!"

Applegate (1977) reported on an "ecological study" of eighteen "first year teachers' changing perceptions" over several months using structured interviews, observations, telephone calls and anecdotal records to collect data. Although each teacher's experience was unique, certain trends emerged such as a tentative commitment to the profession, frequent confrontation with unexpected issues and frustrations, a great deal of satisfaction with student contact and positive feelings towards their teacher education program. An area receiving special attention in this study was the first year teacher's relationships with others and how important these were in forming or shaping his/her perception of self as teacher.

Based on the Applegate (1977) study, *Biting the Apple* (Ryan, Newman, Mager, Applegate, Lasley, Flora, Johnston, 1980) provides accounts of twelve beginning teachers as they made their transition from student to teacher. Seven teacher-educators observed and interviewed these beginning teachers in an attempt to discover and understand the "intellectual and emotional movements of our teachers, their successes and failures, their joys and terrors and what sparked their energies or deflated them. . ." (p. 17) They "attempted to map out the life space of our teacher-subjects" as they lived this particular year, in order to forewarn education students of the special problems of the first year. (p. 14) Rather than providing conclusions and recommendations, the twelve case studies are presented to the reader as data upon which to contemplate.

Janet Newberry (1978) focused on the beginning teacher's search for assistance from colleagues. Resulting from her observations, discussions and analysis two major themes emerged: experienced teachers hesitate to offer assistance, while beginning teachers hesitate to ask for it. Experienced teachers tended to "view the professional development of beginning teachers as the principal's responsibility" and were reluctant to offer advice for fear it might be viewed as interference. On the other hand, beginning teachers are given assignments comparable to the rest of staff with the expectation that they can handle it. Newberry claims, "This expectation may lead beginning teachers to feel that any requests for assistance will be interpreted as signs of incompetence. " She found that most frequently beginning teachers equated competence with keeping students under control, and justifiably so, for several researchers suggest that administrators, peers, parents and children do judge a teacher's competence largely on the basis of control.

A study by Felder, Hollis, Piper and Houston (1979) sought to identify concerns and problems experienced by beginning teachers and the methods they used to cope with them. Data were collected from thirty beginning teachers from the end of their student teaching through to the middle of November. They found that these teachers appeared to feel alone and isolated during their first weeks, had a distorted picture of what the realities of teaching would be, were overwhelmed and exhausted by what seemed to be endless paper work and reports, and by the importance they perceived administrators placed on these aspects of teaching." (p. 16) This seems to reinforce Ryan's (1970) contention that the principal's real function is to see that the school runs smoothly. The coping strategies Felder's teachers used changed throughout the time period of the study. Prior to school commencing, talking with various people about their impending assignment predominated. "Talking and coping were apparently synonymous. . ." (p. 7) At the end of three weeks most teachers coped by planning and preparing. "Be armed and ready for the next day was the way to survive." (p. 9) At the end of nine weeks the teachers reported, "conversation with other teachers or the principal" as the most frequently used coping device. In a final analysis, Felder states, "They (the beginning teachers) either did not have the ability or could not find access to professional resources to aid them in coping with their problems." (p. 16)

Lacey (1977) describes some of the social strategies new teachers adopt, often unknowingly, as they deal with the complexities of a new school. First, he speaks of "internalized adjustment," in which the teacher comes to accept the values and practices in the new setting. Another is "strategic compliance" whereby the new teacher decides to go along with what is happening for now, even though not in agreement with it. In the third, "strategic redefinition," the teacher sees herself as a change agent and consciously tries to change or reform the school situation.

An ethnographic study by Hawke (1980) sought to discover the unique features experienced by a beginning art teacher "Bruce", and tested a number of propositions relevant to Bruce's experience. Bruce did have difficulty in moving from the role of student to that of teacher and he was unaware of and distressed by the many non-teaching tasks required of him. While he found the administrator his greatest source of assistance, he also found the principal made few concessions for him as a new teacher, expected him to perform as efficiently as experienced staff, and was primarily concerned with keeping the school running. Bruce experienced difficulty in changing his students' expectations to be more positive toward art education and while colleagues seemed disinterested in what he was doing, he felt they expected him to conform to the established norms of the school and community. (Hawke, 1980, p. 287-300)

While extensive surveys of beginning teachers in Great Britain, United States, Australia and Canada give a general picture of some of the concerns, problems and satisfactions new staff members experience in their first year, in light of longitudinal studies, it is possible the survey responses would have been quite different if given at some other time in that first year. During the first few weeks of school, beginning teachers naturally experience many new and unexpected occurrences which they have to come to terms with. Surveys conducted at this time will undoubtedly give a different picture than those done in May or June when most first year teachers will have developed a teaching style that accommodates a now-familiar curriculum, individual students and all the taken-for-granted school procedures. Perhaps it is because Edmonds (1979) did his survey in May that he is able to report beginning teachers in Canada as "mostly satisfied with their entry into teaching" (p. 59). While the Australian questionnaire study (Tisher, 1979) provided some interesting findings, it clearly points to the need for further research giving more attention to beginning teachers' point of view.

The studies by Eddy (1969), Applegate (1977), Felder (1979) and Hawke (1980) all focused on small numbers of beginning teachers during the fall term. Through observations, interviews, tape recorded accounts and questionnaires these studies identified concerns, problems and satisfactions beginning teachers experienced over a number of months. Reading the personal experiences of these individual teachers began to provide the present researcher with a better understanding of how various teachers had experienced the transition from student to professional teacher. While Hawke's ethnographic study of "Bruce" provided an extensive description of Bruce's daily experiences, it did not delve into the meaning these experiences had for him.

In the studies foregoing those by Applegate (1977), Felder (1979), and Hawke (1980) came closest to answering the question "What is it like to be a beginning teacher?" They all used qualitative research methods and followed the teachers through part of their first year. While they provided detailed factual descriptions of what it was like for beginning teachers, to some extent, they failed to disclose the meaning the teachers were giving to their experienes. The present study attempts to provide both a thick descriptive portrayal of three teachers' experiences, as well as the meaning each teacher gave to her experience of becoming a teacher.

As this researcher wanted not only to gain a better understanding of what beginning teachers were experiencing but also to delve into the meaning of those experiences for them, she chose to fashion a study focussing on the lived world of a small number of beginning teachers, employing a variety of the research methods used in the studies reviewed.

B. Orientation and Procedure

Qualitative Research

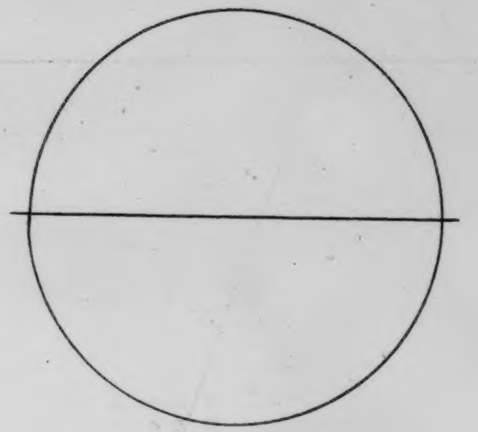
In considering the life world of a beginning teacher, one immediately thinks of the apparent features such as size and location of school, materials to work with, the daily activities children engage in, administrative guidance, parent conferences and so forth. These are a real part of the teacher's objective world. However, the lived world of a beginning teacher encompasses not only what she encounters as she enters her new profession, but also the meaning she gives to the situation. She is both affected by, and affects, the world into which she enters. If we are to understand what her world is really like we must try to uncover what she is experiencing, how she feels, and why she is doing certain things. Qualitative methodologies assume there is value to an analysis of both the inner and outer perspective of human behavior. Rist (1980) and Patton (1975) caution researchers that different kinds of problems require different research methodologies, and encourage educational researchers to consider an alternative paradigm that stresses "... understanding that focuses on the *meaning* of human behavior, the context of social interaction, an *empathetic* understanding of subjective states, and the connection between subjective states and behavior." (1975, p. 7)

Research of this nature is frequently referred to as "qualitative" although some prefer to use the term "human science perspective" as it acknowledges the significance of human consciousness (Cottrell, 1982). These terms are often used interchangeably as they both encourage a deeper understanding of human beings. Filstead outlines some of the possible methodologies suitable to qualitative research:

> Qualitative methodology refers to those research strategies, such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, field work, etc. , which allow the researcher to obtain first-hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to"get close to the data," thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself. . . (1970, p. 6)

In the present study a number of qualitative research strategies were used to enable the researcher to "get close to the data. "

The purpose of the study is illustrated in Figure 1. The circle stands for the world of the beginning teacher with the top half portraying the observable features of the world,



The observable world of the beginning teacher can be described and explained.

The world of meaning of the beginning teacher requires understanding.

Figure 1 **The World of the Beginning Teacher**

while the bottom half indicates the meanings associated with the lived world. Initially, the researcher became familiar with each beginning teacher's observable world through observations and interviews. As she gained familiarity with the observable world of each participant, she was in a better position to enter into conversations with the teachers that disclosed the meaning of their experiences. As certain aspects of the teacher's world became known, the understanding of the whole was seen differently. Likewise, as the whole became more visible, the parts took on a different meaning. Throughout the duration of the study there was a dialectic between what observable events were occurring in each teacher's world and the meaning the teacher gave to these events. Through observing and participating in each teacher's classroom world, the researcher came to a better understanding of what each was experiencing. As she shared in some of the joys and frustrations the teachers were experiencing, she established a rapport and trust that was an important prerequisite to delving into the meaning their experiences had for them. While it was relatively easy to describe the observable world, the world of meaning could be understood only through a true sharing of ideas.

In order to reveal the world of meaning Schutz encourages the researcher to look behind the observable world:

> The outward facts and bodily movements are understood as indications of the lived experience of the person being observed. The attention of the observer is focused not on the indications but on what lies behind them. This

> is genuine understanding of the other person. (Schutz, 1970, p. 173)

People often give little thought to the personal meaning they give to situations. Werner speaks of this human meaning in the following way:

> One of the basic things we observe about man is that he constantly gives meaning to things: he is forced to define the ever-changing situations of which he is a part, to classify the things around him, to shape his perceptions, to interpret his experience, to anticipate the actions of others, and to interrelate the past and present. In other words, meaning is everything to man. Because it underlies all he does, he rarely recognizes the importance and pervasiveness of meaning for the human world. (Werner, 1979, p. 8)

In order to understand the meaning beginning teachers give to the situations in which they live, the teachers must each have an opportunity to tell their own story. Through informal conversations and open ended interviews the teachers were encouraged to share their experiences with the researcher who attempted to both "grasp and be grasped" by the meaning of the situation. Natanson describes this shared understanding in the following way:

> When I encounter man acting in his social world, I know that I must understand him as a human being, and this means that his actions mean something to him as well as me, relate to his world as well as mine, and are ultimately rooted in the interpretative scheme he has created for living his life. (in Schutz, 1962, p. 21)

This process of coming to understand a situation or someone's life world is an act of interpretation. Werner and Rothe see "ethnographic descriptions as a way of understanding, i. e. , interpreting human events" (1980, p. 96). Any interpretation must take place in a context, so an important aspect of ethnography is to become familiar with the situations, activities, artifacts, conversations that are part of the life world one is observing.

An ethnographic approach enabled the researcher to become familiar with the everyday happenings in the new teachers' world, as well as delve into the meaning these happenings had for each participant. In order to develop an in-depth understanding of the participants in their unique situations, on-site observations and interviews were carried out over a period of six months. Contact was maintained with the teachers for a further six months through informal meetings and interviews. Ethnography, as an interpretive methodology, was used to enable each teacher to articulate and interpret the reality of her own life world. Each teacher's experiences were written up as "thick descriptive" [2] portrayals.

---

[2] Thick description, a term used by Geertz (1973), refers to the provision of a rich

As the researcher interpreted and portrayed the teacher's experiences, further questions arose that were explored with the teachers. As the year progressed, certain experiences and feelings seemed to surface over and over again as emergent themes in the teacher's experiences. The researcher focused on these in an attempt to gain an understanding of what they meant to the teachers.

Preliminary Phase

During the spring prior to the commencement of the current study, the researcher met with three teachers in their first year to find out what had been significant to them in their "becoming real teachers" as well as to explore the feasibility of using ethnographic techniques for the present study.

Initially, the researcher met with the "Induction Team" of the Edmonton Public School Board in April, 1982 to discuss the nature of assistance provided new teachers in their system. From approximately thirty first year placements in early childhood programs (K-3), the first three principals and teachers contacted agreed to participate in this pilot phase of the study. One teacher had two kindergarten classes in one inner-city school, the second had two kindergarten classes in two inner-city schools (one small, one large), while the third had a grade one/two split in a small inner-city school. Background data about each school were collected through interviews with principals and teachers and through on-site observations.

Initially a semi-structured interview was held with each teacher to obtain information on background, preparation, expectations and initial teaching experiences. These conversations ranged over a number of topics introduced by both the participant and researcher. Observations were made in each classroom with the researcher taking different roles, sometimes strictly as an observer, sometimes as a participant in classroom activities.

Field notes were made of ongoing classroom activities and teacher-child interactions, and during interviews, either brief notes were made at the time and expanded later or the nature of the conversation was recorded at the earliest convenient time.

---

[2](cont'd)account of experience rather than a superficial one.

These field notes were typed and taken back to participants for verification. Some topics were extended in further conversations.

This preliminary field work provided the researcher with first hand experience upon which the following decisions pertinent to the present study were made:

Regarding ethnographic techniques

a. In activity-based early childhood programs, the researcher found the "observer as participant" role most comfortable for all involved. As the teacher frequently involved the researcher as a volunteer aide, she was able to experience the classroom both as an observer and as a participant.

b. During the pilot phase observational notes were typed up and taken back to the teachers for verification. While it is important to obtain verification of the content when one is attempting to portray another's world, the extensive transcribing and typing seemed unnecessary. The researcher found it more valuable to spend this time reviewing notes as soon as possible after each session, filling in additional information, adding interpretations and noting questions for the next meeting.

c. Although the researcher always had a tape recorder available for recording conversations with the teachers, she found that often pertinent information was forthcoming on the way to the staff room, out on the playground during supervision, or as an aside when someone left the classroom. This reinforced the necessity for accurate field notes from memory rather than relying only on tape recorded conversations. However, the use of a tape recorder for longer, pre-scheduled conversations enabled the conversation to flow more easily than when the researcher was taking notes and asking for clarification on the spot. Note taking and tape recording were both used in the present study.

d. Two of the teachers were in one school so the researcher tried a three-way conversation with them to determine its usefulness as a means of collecting data. Although one person's comments did stimulate related ideas in another, it seemed to contribute more to obtaining the commonalities of their experiences rather than the uniqueness. As the researcher was searching for the meaning of each individual teacher's experience, she decided to meet with each teacher individually in the present study.

e. The use of both observation and interviewing seemed to provide a stronger approach for revealing the lived world of a beginning teacher than either of these methods alone could do.

Emergent themes: Glasser and Strauss (1967) speak of "emergent themes" arising from the situations being observed. It was reassuring to find this was so. In the pilot study the following themes began to emerge:

a. Even though two of the three teachers were in "difficult placements,"[3] they were handling their initial year in a competent manner and felt good about how the year had gone. All three attributed much of their positive feeling to administration that was supportive of early childhood education.

b. Two teachers had found special activities planned for new teachers especially helpful.

c. Each of the three teachers had met their principal prior to being appointed to the position and felt "good" about working with them.

While these reflected the experiences of the teachers in the pilot study in the spring, they did not emerge as themes in the present year long study.

The Role of the Researcher

In describing ethnographic methodology Wilson (1977) speaks of the "naturalistic-ecological" hypotheses which are based on studying one's subjects in their natural settings so one can observe the situation as it is. He maintains that "The researcher shares the daily life of participants and systematically works to understand their feelings and reactions" (p. 257). Schatzman and Strauss reiterate this:

> The researcher *must* get close to the people whom he studies; he understands that their actions are best comprehended when observed on the spot - in the natural ongoing environment where they live and work. . . A dialogue with persons in their natural situation will reveal the nuances of meaning from which their perspectives and definitions are continually forged. (1973, p. 5-6)

---

[3] Teachers and administrators in the school system frequently speak of "difficult placements" when referring to split grades and two kindergarten classes in two separate schools.

Wilson concurs with the need to get close to those studied if the researcher is to understand the "framework within which the subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions" (1977, p. 249). While the researcher agrees it is important to get close to the teachers she is seeking to understand, it is only through distancing herself that she begins to see clearly what the teachers are experiencing. There is a danger in coming so close to the subject of study that one can no longer objectively interpret the experiences they are having.

The role taken by the researcher will be basically that of "participant observer." Bruyn (1966) states the intent of the participant observer is to "catch the process as it occurs in the experience of those he studies." As the researcher wanted to "catch the process" as well as reveal the meaning, she felt Bruyn's three axioms provided relevant guidelines for her role in the study:

Axiom 1: The participant observer shares in the life activities and sentiments of people in face-to-face relationships. This role requires both detachment and personal involvement.

Axiom 2: The participant observer is a normal part of the culture and the life of the people under observation.

Axiom 3: The role of the participant observer reflects the social process of living in society.

Junker (in Bruyn) describes four different roles which the participant observer may assume according to the design and purpose of his study:

a. Complete participant. The field worker becomes a complete member of the group under investigation. In this role the observer's ability to gather information outside the group is severely limited.

b. Participant as observer. The fieldworker's observer activities are not wholly concealed, but are "kept under wraps" or subordinated to activities as participant. This role may limit access to some kinds of information - especially at the secret level.

c. Observer as participant. [4] The observer's activities are made known at the outset, and are more or less publicly sponsored by people in the situation being studied. The role may provide access to a wide range of information and even secrets may be given to the fieldworker when he becomes known for keeping them, as well as for guarding confidential information. In this role the researcher might achieve maximum freedom to gather information but only at the price of accepting maximum constraints on his reporting.

---

[4] Denzin, 1970, p. 189-191 defines "observer as participant" quite differently. In the present study Junker's definition most clearly describes the role taken by the researcher.

d. Complete observer. A range of roles in which at one end the observer hides behind a one-way mirror while at the other extreme his activities are totally public. (in Bruyn, 1966, p. 15, 16)

If the researcher reveals insights into the collective symbols of people in one group in one community, her conclusions can be understood and have significance for people in other groups (Bruyn, 1966, p. 13-22).

In the present study, the researcher became involved in the school setting of each of the three teachers as an "observer as participant." While the researcher made it clear that she was in no way being evaluative nor serving as a consultant, she did participate as a volunteer helper. Depending on the preference of each of the teachers and the ongoing classroom activities, the researcher was sometimes asked to assist with certain activities, supervise a group of children, run errands or merely left to quietly observe. This arrangement seemed to work well, for it allowed the researcher to be sensitive to the wishes, and needs, of the teacher, and yet retain the freedom to participate or withdraw from activities at her discretion.

Descriptions of the objective world of the teacher were drawn from these observations. They were used as stepping off points for further questioning and interpretation by the teacher and researcher. Bruyn explains the difference between this approach and those in which the researcher independently structures the data:

> The traditional empiricist considers himself (as a scientist) to be the primary source of knowledge, and trusts his own senses and logic more than he would trust that of his subjects. The participant observer, on the other hand, considers the interpretations of his subjects to have first importance. . . . By taking the role of his subjects he recreates in his own imagination and experience the thoughts and feelings which are in the minds of those he studies. (1966, p. 12)

As the researcher began to write descriptive portrayals of each teacher's experiences, her role shifted from one of observing, discussing and recording to one of questioning, clarifying and interpreting. Although the descriptive portrayals of each teacher's experiences can be considered a first level of interpretation, the intent of this study was to delve into the meaning the teachers gave to their experiences thus revealing a deeper level of interpretation.

Research Process

a. Selection of Subjects

As the intent of the study was to gain a fuller understanding of beginning teachers' experiences, it was necessary to limit the numbers and settings. Three beginning early childhood teachers with the Edmonton Public School Board were selected. By the end of August, 1982, only five beginning teachers had been placed in early childhood classrooms.[5] Of these, four were placed in kindergarten, while the fifth was in a grade one class. As she had taught for six months the previous year, she was not eligible to be included in the study. The first two kindergarten teachers contacted were willing to participate. A third possible participant was contacted at an orientation meeting for teachers new to the system held on September 1, 1982. Later that evening she called to say she had been offered a grade two class and would be willing to participate in the study. In order to protect the identity of teachers, students, staff members, and schools, anonymous names will be used throughout the study.

Each of the three teachers in the study had graduated from the University of Alberta in the spring with a specialization in early childhood education. Patti was assigned to teach two kindergarten classes in Alnwick, a large four-year-old suburban school serving a multi-ethnic population. Caroline had chosen to teach only one kindergarten class, resulting in a half-time appointment at Autumn Leaf, a small, old, inner-city school, while Joy was assigned to teach a grade two class in Notikewin, a suburban school serving a newly developing area of extremely diverse socioeconomic housing.

b. Gaining Entry and Establishing Rapport

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) see this as a crucial stage in a study, for the successful collection of meaningful experiences is often determined by the initial impression created in the field. Although one needs the approval of top administration, they suggest dissociating oneself from them early and establishing one's independence so participants do not see the researcher as part of the hierarchy. This point seemed especially important to this study, as it focused on "how it is for a beginning teacher," not how "others in the system view the neophyte. "

---

[5] Early childhood classrooms as defined at the University of Alberta, refer to kindergarten, grades one, two and three.

After contacting several people in the Edmonton Public School Board regarding the study, approval was given to contact teachers and principals directly to solicit their cooperation. Each prospective teacher was phoned, the nature of the study was described and her interest in the project determined. A meeting was arranged, at which time the study was explained in more detail, questions clarified, and her willingness to participate obtained. Once the teacher agreed to be in the study, her principal was then contacted to gain his or her approval.

It is essential to gain the confidence and trust of participants if they are to feel comfortable and non-threatened by the researcher's presence. As Bruyn (1966, p. 18) puts it, "Participants must come to trust and value the observer enough to be willing to share intimate thoughts with him and answer his endless questions." As rapport developed between the researcher and participants the teachers became more relaxed and open in the information and feelings shared.

The researcher met with each teacher prior to the beginning of the school year to explore some of the expectations and hopes each teacher held for the coming year. During the initial visit the researcher was taken on a tour of the school and introduced to the principal. The teachers were busy preparing for the commencement of school and enthusiastically shared their plans and hopes for the opening day.

c. Towards an Understanding of Beginning Teachers

Participant Observation. Several authors (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Wolcott, 1976; Geertz, 1973) speak of the importance of the researcher getting "close" to the people and the situation they intend to study. They must "become part of the situation being studied in order to feel what it is like for the people in that situation." (Sandy, 1979, p. 527) As described earlier, the role of the researcher in this study was "observer as participant," wherein the researcher both participated in and observed the ongoing activities in each of the three teachers' lived world. Commencing the week prior to school opening in September, the researcher spent approximately one day a week with each of the teachers, and attended many school functions and relevant new teacher orientation sessions. Within each school the researcher's role evolved somewhat differently depending both on the teacher's assignment and her pattern of interacting with the rest of the staff. Patti was teaching two kindergarten classes in a relatively large school in a new suburban area with twenty-five full time teachers; Caroline had a kindergarten class in the mornings at a small inner city school with five fulltime staff; while Joy taught grade two in a medium sized (eight full time staff) suburban area.

The researcher usually spent a full day in Patti's kindergarten class with informal chats throughout the day and with longer interview sessions occurring after school on most days. Teaching two kindergarten classes required Patti to "get ready for the day" twice, so much of her recess and noon time was taken up with last minute preparations and cleaning up. She was also on a different time schedule than other teachers which gave her limited time at noon to socialize with the large staff, whom she found rather unapproachable initially. Most of Patti's day was spent in her classroom, with trips to other parts of the school being of a business nature to check mail, hand in forms, telephone a parent, and so forth. The researcher participated in ongoing class activities and assisted with daily clerical tasks as a volunteer parent helper right from the beginning of school. A further role was that of confidant, with Patti sharing many of her concerns and feelings with the researcher, "as someone who understood. "

As Caroline started the year with only a morning kindergarten class, the researcher would spend the morning in the classroom, have lunch with the entire staff and talk about how things were going with Caroline for an hour or two in the afternoon. As Caroline became more involved in school projects, finding time for interviews became difficult. Scheduling lunch and a time for talking away from the school provided for uninterrupted conversations. Upon the researcher commenting about the lengthiness of some of these semi-social lunches Caroline's reply was, "Oh it's great to have someone to talk to. You're always so interested in everything I'm doing. Most of my friends are sick and tired of listening to me talk about school. "

As school started, Joy was overwhelmed by both the size and heterogeneity of her class, along with all the materials she had to become familiar with. While she outwardly welcomed me each week as an observer in her class, I sensed some discomfort at my presence so only stayed half a day for the first few weeks. Any additional strain added to her already stressful days seemed to be an inappropriate interference. Right from our initial meeting Joy seemed to be grateful for an opportunity to talk to someone about how things were going. In October she suggested combining her prep time and lunch hour so we could "get away from the school for a break. " This became a frequent happening and allowed us to explore the joys and sorrows of teaching in a neutral territory.

On the days the researcher was in the schools, she participated in whatever activities the teacher was involved in. These included outside supervision, weiner roasts, staff meetings, informal staff planning sessions, patrol meetings, field trips, assemblies, birthday parties, special luncheons, casual exchanges between parents and teachers as well as scheduled conferences, theme days, gym classes, preparations for Christmas concerts and carnivals. The researcher also attended a number of school related activities such as open houses, family nights, Christmas Concerts, and special parent evenings.

Another group of activities the researcher was involved in were the school system orientation sessions for new teachers. In December the researcher spent a continuous week with each of the three teachers. For Joy it was the week when her class was finally split, leaving her with twenty second graders, for Caroline it was the week she took on the additional responsibility of teaching grade five in the afternoons; while for Patti it was the week immediately preceding holidays with the joys and frustrations of preparing for the Christmas concert.

Being with each teacher every day for a week enabled the researcher to experience the world of each teacher in a way that was impossible through once-a-week visits. While each of them willingly gave an hour or two of her time to talk to the researcher on her weekly visit, her heightened awareness of "all the things they had to do" made a request for "time to talk" seem unreasonably demanding during the continuous daily visits. While there seemed less time for talking to the teachers in the study, there was more opportunity to become acquainted with the rest of the staff and become involved in school activities.

Although data were collected from August 1982 through to August 1983, more intensive observations were made during the initial five months while the teachers were experiencing the initial phase of getting established. Less frequent observations and interviews took place from January through August and tended to focus more on clarifying and exploring meaning. However, this extended contact with the teachers also enabled the researcher to portray the reality of their entire school year.

Interviews/Conversations. Interviews in the traditional sense often result in the researcher sitting down with a structured list of questions and the interviewee answering. While the researcher had formulated a number of questions to use as starting points, her main concern was to let the teachers speak of things that were important to them, for they were viewed as the experts in relation to their own lived world. In the present study interview data refer to information obtained through informal chats, telephone conversations, semi-structured and structured interviews. The more informal methods took place anywhere, at any time, and provided on-the-spot reactions and feelings about what the teachers were experiencing. The scheduled interviews more often explored general areas in depth with either the researcher or teacher introducing topics of interest.

The researcher sometimes used open ended questions (e.g., How did you feel the parent meeting went?) to encourage the teacher to talk about certain events, and sometimes more specific questions to elicit further information on a happening or else clarify previously shared thoughts (e.g., You mentioned having interviews with various principals about a position. What things did you pick up from them that helped you make a decision about where you wanted to teach?) On the other hand, the teacher might start a session with, "Has this ever been some week. Joe's parents came in. . . ," or "My principal nominated me for the Edwin Parr Award. . . " Usually these disclosures were accompanied by many "feeling comments", which allowed the researcher to gently probe into the meaning the incident had for the teacher (e.g. What was it like to be accused of picking on their son?) As these had been significant experiences in the lives of the teachers, they usually talked extensively as though there were some need to share their feelings with a "safe outsider. " The following comment seemed to summarize these conversations: "It's easier to talk to you because you know what I'm talking about and there's no evaluation. "

Initially most of the interviews occurred at the school in the teacher's classroom, but as the year progressed occasionally the talks occurred over lunch or dinner at a nearby restaurant. Getting away from the school seemed to provide a desirable break and reprieve from the many interruptions at school.

Documents/artifacts. Throughout the year samples of various printed materials were collected. These included letters to and from parents and staff, daily lesson plans, report cards, conference notes, lists of things to do next year, forms to be filled out, unit plans, and samples of children's work. While they were not analyzed extensively, they were monitored to get some idea of the nature and amount of paper work handled by teachers and to supplement the verbal description of each teacher's experiences.

Recording Data.

Field notes: The researcher kept a note book for each participating teacher, in which she recorded observations at the time or as soon after the event as possible. The content of informal conversations was entered as close to verbatim as possible and frequently checked with the teacher for accuracy.

Tape recorded transcriptions: Most of the scheduled interviews were tape recorded, with the researcher transcribing them later. Although transcribing was time-consuming and tedious, it was useful to have verbatim statements when developing portrayals of the teachers. When providing "thick descriptions" of the teachers lived world it was much more powerful to use "their own words" to tell their story.

Daily logs: Although the participants were encouraged to keep daily logs of some of the highlights, problems and reflections they experienced during the intervals between visits by the researcher, the demands on their time were so great that none of them felt able to keep up a regular log. One did note significant happenings of the day on her daily plan and frequently jotted down items she wanted to bring to my attention.

d. Descriptive Portrayals

For the beginning teacher

Through studying the three teachers in their natural settings where they were actually experiencing the first few days, weeks, and indeed the first year of their teaching profession, the researcher developed "thick descriptive" portrayals of what the teachers were experiencing and how they were feeling (Geertz, 1973). Bruyn describes the participant observer's role as ". . . studying meanings which exist in the minds of people other than himself by empathically taking their roles as though they were his own. . ." (1966, p. 278) Throughout the year, the researcher attempted to cultivate an empathetic understanding with the teachers, trying to understand their actions, their feelings, and their reactions.

For the researcher

Initially the researcher was an observer of the teachers, trying to record accurately the experiences they had and what they said. As certain aspects of the teacher's experiences seemed to take on significance for them the researcher explored these further with the teacher in question, and looked more closely at the other two teachers to see if similar experiences were occurring for them.

As the researcher began to write about the experiences of each teacher, she found that the first account was objectively descriptive. As she questioned both herself and the teachers as to why certain things had happened or not happened and what the meaning was, she was able to provide further interpretation that augmented the "thick description" initially used.

Validity. While the purpose of the present study is not to develop plans of action, but rather to search for greater understanding of the reality of becoming a teacher as experienced by three young people, it is important that the final portrayal have internal validity. If the reader is to gain a better understanding of this experience, it must be a sensitive, believable account.

Psathas proposes rigorous tests that help ensure that ". . . the results of an inquiry fit, make sense, and are true to the understanding of ordinary actors in the everyday world." (1973, p. 12) His first test is, *"Are the findings faithful to and consistent with the experiences of those who live in that world? Are the findings faithful representations, descriptions, accounts, or interpretations of what those who ordinarily live those activities would themselves recognize as true? If second order constructs were translated back into first order constructs to which they refer, would the observer's report be recognized as a valid and faithful acount of "what the activity is really like?"*

The researcher took the descriptive portrayals found in chapter three back to each of the teachers for them to validate that it truly was their story. A few minor corrections of factual information were required, but in each case the teacher indicated that the researcher had captured the essence of her year with comments like, "You know more about me than I do; You're right on; You seem to have captured what it was like. "

Psathas' second test is, *"Armed with 'only' the knowledge gained from reading the account presented by the observer, would someone else be able to understand what he was seeing when confronted with the actual life world reality of the events described?"* In much the same way one would judge literature as good or bad, the reader asks, "Is this portrayal of three teachers convincing? Does it seem real?" In addition to the teachers themselves, three external readers read the portrayals and felt they had come to know and understand the experiences of the three teachers.

Homans (1966) outlines six "criteria for adequacy" that he suggests be used both in designing and evaluating the authenticity of a qualitative study. He claims that if these six criteria are met, the factual descriptions should be true to the situation as it was. His criteria follow with an explanation of how the researcher met each of them in the present study.

1. *Time - the more time an individual spends with a group, the more likely it is that he will obtain an accurate interpretation of the social meanings its members live by.*

   From August to December the researcher spent one day a week with each teacher. This usually was in the classroom setting, but also included evening meetings and inservices. From January through August she met with the teachers every three or four weeks, sometimes in the school setting and sometimes at a mutually convenient location such as a restaurant or home.

2. *Place - the closer the observer works geographically to the people he studies, the more acurate should be his interpretations.*

   As a participant observer, the researcher experienced the isolation of being the only class in the basement, the inconvenience of having no water source in the kindergarten, and the crowded conditions of having thirty children in a small classroom. By living through these experiences with the teachers the researcher was able to develop an empathy for what they were experiencing.

3. *Social circumstance - the more varied the status opportunities within which the observer can relate to his subjects, and the more varied the activities he witnesses, the more likely the observer's interpretations will be true.*

The researcher observed each teacher interacting with her students, with parents and with other staff. She was also involved with the teacher as a helper, a confidant, a professional colleague and as a student attempting to find out what it really was like to be starting one's professional career.

4. *Language - the more familiar the observer is with the language of his subjects, the more accurate should be his interpretations.*

While the researcher was familiar with the language of the school, her major concern was not to take things for granted, but rather question the unquestionable, like, "Why *do* beginning teachers have to be assigned outdoor supervision the first week of school?" or "Why are new teachers assigned classes as late as September first?"

5. *Intimacy - the greater the degree of intimacy the observer achieves with his subjects, the more accurate will be his interpretations.*

While this is not necessarily so, there were several indications that the researcher had developed a high level of rapport with the teachers and was seen more as a friend and confidant than a researcher. In January, when the teachers were informed the researcher would be spending less time in their classrooms, some of their comments were, "Oh we'll (students and teacher) miss you. You seem like part of our class. Just drop in anytime. " Each of the teachers seemed to appreciate the opportunity to share some of their feelings about what they were experiencing. "I've always looked forward to our sessions together. Our sessions have really prompted me to reflect on what I'm doing. "

6. *Consensus of confirmation in the context - the more the observer confirms the expressive meaning of the community, either directly or indirectly, the more accurate will be his interpretations of them.*

The researcher constantly tried to be guided by the insider's viewpoint. When the descriptive portrayals were taken back to the teachers they confirmed that the story told was indeed theirs.

Interpretation

Within the present study, interpretation refers to an attempt by the researcher to interpret the experiences of three beginning teachers "according to the way they understand their everyday life. " (Werner and Rothe, 1980) Through becoming part of each teacher's lived world, the researcher sought to come to a shared understanding of their world. Initially the researcher was bombarded by a vast array of seemingly unrelated experiences (Smith, 1979), but as she became more familiar with the three situations a more complete understanding each teacher's lived world began to take shape. At times certain actions, reactions and comments triggered new insights or hunches that called for further interpretation.

Through her own experience of entering the teaching profession, as well as talking with many new teachers over the past few years, the researcher came to the study with a pre-understanding of what it was like to be a beginning teacher. To some extent she was able to set these aside and be open to what the teachers in the study were actually experiencing. Her intent was not to impose a pre-determined structure on the study, but to let the experiences unfold naturally .

While a researcher is never able to interpret a situation exactly as the person who is experiencing it would, a shared understanding of the three teachers' experiences was possible in the present study.

Emergent Themes. Throughout the year certain experiences seemed to hold particular significance for each of the teachers. As themes began to emerge, the researcher explored the meaning they held for each of the teachers. Sometimes what was very important for one teacher did not hold much importance for the others. However a number of themes like struggle for control, someone cares, there's never enough time, were relevant to each of the three teachers in the study.

In addition to exploring these themes with the teachers, the researcher went to the literature to see what others had written on the meaning of control, caring, time and so forth. A number of the emergent themes are discussed in chapter four.

Validity of Themes. In a discussion on "that mode of being called teaching" Denton (1974) questions if a description of teaching can ever be complete. His answer is "never . . . because the mystery (of teaching) can never be fully disclosed . . . when is it ended? Whenever you choose." (p. 113)

While the themes arising from this study are open to further interpretation the researcher chooses to offer them to the reader now, and trusts that they are both believable as people test them against their own experiences, and that they will reveal something new about the reality of a beginning teacher's life world.

III. UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE WORLD OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS

A. Introduction

Chapter Three provides descriptive portrayals of the experiences of three beginning early childhood teachers. These portrayals are based on the observations of the researcher as a participant observer, and interpretations of extensive interviews with them about their experiences. In the following descriptions every attempt has been made to portray this first year as it was for Joy, Caroline and Patti. Each of them read "their story" and accepted it as "the way it was".

B. JOY

Becoming A Teacher

Early Experiences in Joy's Life

Joy spent her first ten years in Saskatoon and then in 1967 her family moved to Victoria as a Centennial project. She was second in a family of four, with an older brother and a younger brother and sister. They were a close family and enjoyed summer holidays exploring central Canada through motoring and camping trips. Their home was filled with books and to this day reading is a favorite pastime of Joy's. Her recollection of her elementary school days are vague and she can't recall any of her teachers. She spoke rather wistfully, "To tell you the truth I cannot remember one - maybe that's why I want to make a difference. You hear people talk about 'I can still remember my grade two teacher ...'"

Joy wants to be remembered. She wants her students to retain a lasting impression that she was interested in them - that she really cared about each of them.

Joy feels that many learning problems in school can be attributed to children not feeling good about themselves - not feeling they matter.

> So much of it stems from us not really paying attention to the person - not really seeing what they're trying to tell us - more treating the surface. Like teaching them the things they need to know for society, but never letting them know that they're valuable.

> In school I was your typical shy little girl who was scared of anyone who said boo to them. I was very insecure. I never really felt cared for as a person. I always did a lot of things for attention.
>
> I never really valued anyone because I was so insecure in myself, so I felt that they couldn't think of me as an important friend ... So now I feel that it's really important to give that - it's important to let children, and my friends, know they are important to me.... (83.02.24)[6]

Although Joy does not have positive feelings about her own school days, they made a very real impact on her and certainly affect what she now sees as important to herself and children. As a young person growing up Joy was quite insecure and lonely, without a definite goal in life. Schooling was a way of putting in time until her life took on some purpose. She never really got turned on to learning and can't recall any teacher ever having much impact on her - ever really being in touch with her. This has affected her idea of the kind of teacher Joy now aspires to be. Educational literature (Lortie, 1975) often refers to teachers modeling their teachers, but in this case Joy has purposefully set out to be different from what her teachers seemed to her. She wants to teach her students, wants them to catch the excitement and satisfaction of learning.

> . . . when they go out that door I want them to feel they've had a satisfactory day - a good experience. I want them to learn too . . . to feel that the process of learning is exciting - is fun - is changing - that they have power. I want to foster in them a wanting to learn. (83.02.24)

Falling Into Education

During high school in Victoria, Joy's main interests lay in home management, design and English. Not sure of what she wanted to pursue upon graduation, she and a friend decided that attending a church college in Calgary might be a good experience while their career aspirations became more defined. Upon completing the one year leadership program, she put her new skills to use in organizing and implementing a summer recreation program for children. That fall she was offered a position as instructional aide in a private school.

In the mornings she worked with early achieving five year olds while the afternoon was filled with "working for whoever needed me" in tutoring individuals or small groups, bible study, arranging field trips, doing language experience and even substitute teaching for a grade three teacher for two weeks. Marriage that summer took Joy to Pincher Creek and the following two years saw her teaching in a cooperative nursery school which entailed team planning and teaching with two other teachers and the parents. By this time Joy seemed well into a career of working with children and so she enrolled part-time in the education program at the University of Lethbridge .

---

[6] Dates provided for quotes of the participants refer to dated observations and interviews recorded in the researcher's field notes.

Joy also worked for four months as program coordinator of the Native Friendship Centre in Pincher Creek where she developed programs, hired teachers, taught courses and provided liason with a local Indian Reserve.

When asked how she came to be in education, Joy reflected,

> It was not really planned. I hadn't even taken the academic route in high school so when I decided to go to University I had to go back and get Math. After working in several teaching situations I guess I felt I needed to back up my experience with credentials, cause no school system would look at me. I could have been an aide but I felt better qualified than that. I never actually planned to be a teacher. I just sort of fell into it. (83.01.19)

Even though Joy claims to have "fallen into teaching," her decision to pursue a career in education was based on actual teaching experience with young children. She came to it with an understanding of what was involved and the knowledge that she liked working with children.

Experiencing University

Having completed most of the first two years of her B.Ed. at the University of Lethbridge as a part time student, Joy and her husband moved to Edmonton where she enrolled as a full time student at the University of Alberta. She experienced some difficulty in changing Universities mid-way through her program. "It was an awful experience coming to the University of Alberta from Lethbridge . No one wanted to hear anything about Lethbridge ." (82.11.16)

After being shuffled from person to person, she eventually became established as an elementary education student specializing in early childhood. She was somewhat indignant that the very course[7] she had found most worthwhile at the University of Lethbridge could not be counted towards her B.Ed. However, she was soon enthusiastically pursuing learning in her new milieu. In reflecting on important influences in her career development she commented,

---

[7] An independent study focusing on the nursery program she was teaching. She wrote a daily log, describing the things that worked well, and for those that didn't, she'd make suggestions for improvement. On a regular basis she met with her professor to discuss her progress.

> I can think of some profs from University - actually all of my profs were important to my development. But then, I think it was because I really wanted to be there . . . I guess the profs that have been important to me and have helped me are the ones that have spent time - individual time with me. Just about all my profs have or I've made it possible for them to - maybe that's a difference too. I've often sought people out to talk to and to say I don't understand this or let's look at this more or can you help me in this area, or what would you recommend? (83.02.24)

Once Joy had decided she wanted to work with young children, she considered the possible alternatives. She could continue working as an aide in various programs, work as a teacher in a pre-kindergarten program, or possibly become involved in day care. Although she had enjoyed her past experience as an aide and nursery school teacher, the possibilities for career growth, as well as the rate of pay, were much more attractive with a school system. However, this required a degree in education. Now education took on a new meaning for Joy. She needed her credentials, but she also found learning could be exciting and challenging. She saw each course and each professor as an opportunity to find out more about working with children. She appreciated the genuine interest many of her professors took in her. "You don't really carry away anything that's lasting or going to affect your life unless you're interacting with people who seem to have a real interest in you as a person." (83.02.24) Of course, Joy was the kind of student that made professors feel good too. She approached them with an interest in finding out about their speciality, she worked hard, she could relate theory to her past experiences.

> I worked pretty hard in University. I think partly because that was the reason I was there . . . I guess because I didn't do all that well in high school I always sort of thought I've got to do well now, and I knew why I was there. I'd gone back as an adult - I had a goal to achieve and I always felt there was so much more you could get out of it if you really put into it. (83.01.17)

With new vistas opening before her, Joy threw herself into the program, earning top marks, excelling in student teaching, and winning several scholarships in her third and fourth years.[1] She also worked in the Reading Clinic where she developed a good understanding of children with special needs, and she was actively involved in the Early Childhood Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

---

[1] Friends of the University Scholarship in Early Childhood Education (based on high academic attainment), Board of Governors Medal in the Faculty of Education (highest academic marks), the Alpha Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Memorial Award (woman student with highest academic standard), Heritage Award, and Province of Alberta Award.

Success for Joy was more than achieving top marks, it was also coming to a better understanding of how children learn. She attributes much of her success at University to, "I knew why I was there, I'd gone back as an adult - I had a goal to achieve." (83.01.18)

Beekman (1982) speaks of the difference between education for adults and children.

> As an adult you're responsible for your own learning because you've chosen to attend. On the other hand, children are required to go to school so it's the teacher's obligation to take responsibility for their learning - they must lead a child to learning. (82.06.10)

As an adult student Joy clearly felt it was her responsibility to get all she could out of her experience at University. There was so much to learn and such a limited time to learn it all. Even when Joy had finished her four-year program there were still many courses she would have liked to take.

When do people stop being children and become adult in respect to learning? Perhaps Joy was a little more "adult" than many of her University peers which resulted in more inner commitment and a higher level of achievement. She felt she was often looked up to as a student because of her past experiences, her work in the reading clinics and her high marks. She was asked to share with classes her particular philosophy of education and to speak about her psycholinguistic approach to reading.

Upon leaving University, Joy felt well prepared - "I knew a lot of stuff and I'd had a lot of experience ..." (83.02.24) She felt good about herself and her abilities. She had changed considerably from the "shy little school girl".

Joy's Beliefs About Education

During her final year at University Joy wrote the following:

> The philosophy of a program must provide the foundation upon which goals, planning, implementation and evaluation can be based. The philosophy must be communicable, open to change based on reassessment of values, and transferable into the practical outworkings of the program itself. (81.12.02)

A few additional excerpts from her stated philosophy provide some idea of the premises that may have guided her as she began to plan her program.

> Young children need time to explore, to create and to solve problems for themselves. Children are individuals who need to be considered as a whole, but with particular needs to: - be helped, guided, cherished - be respected and loved - be treated with dignity - be allowed self reliance - ask questions

> and receive answers - learn about language, communication and develop their own language abilities - develop an identity and self-concept that is favorable and healthy - establish satisfying relationships with others - have opportunities to explore and learn about living things. (81.12.02)

Joy places real emphasis on the need for each child to have meaningful experiences in school that will enable him to develop both personal and intellectual skills necessary for life-long learning.

In describing her "ideal teacher" Joy felt the most important characteristic was to really care for the children.

> Someone who cares for children, one who is willing to listen to them, find out what is important to them, find out their inner needs . . . there must be a willingness to respond to children, to invest yourself in them, to allow yourself to be interested in them. I think that's the key. (83.02.24)

She feels that if a child is to develop a positive self concept it is essential that someone be interested in him. In most cases parents fulfill this role, but more and more parents don't have time or are under emotional stress themselves and children are left feeling very insecure and unimportant. Unless a teacher cares enough to help these children develop a good self concept, they are not likely going to be very motivated to learn anything in the school setting. Joy attributes much of her own insecurity and lack of interest in school to the fact that no teacher ever seemed to care whether she did anything or not.

In addition to caring for children, Joy feels a teacher must understand children and be able to relate to them in appropriate ways.

> I think somebody who has abilities, or will cultivate ability and skills to do things in an interesting manner that will reach the children . . . I think that's the whole basis for manipulative materials - you want to reach them at their level and that's the way they learn best . . . (83.02.24)

A teacher's real strength comes from knowing her individual children and providing what is appropriate for them, not merely carrying out activities that were suggested in some manual or textbook. This requires someone who is able to plan and effectively implement activities, and who can maintain good classroom control while still providing freedom for children to get involved in a variety of meaningful activities. "She has to make it all work." (83.02.24)

Joy felt that a teacher must be prepared to spend time in both planning for the children and developing herself professionally.

> Time with the children and time for preparation . . . even in your third and

> fourth and fifth year - getting new ideas, refreshing yourself, professional development . . . It takes time to do all these things. (83.02.24)

Although she was prepared to put in long hours, there were many days when Joy felt there was just not enough time in a day to do all the things she needed to do.

Joy also expressed the need "to care for yourself, so all the things you are doing are worthwhile, so you feel you're doing something that is important . . ." (83.02.24) In *When Teachers Face Themselves*, Jersild develops the theme that education should help both children and adults to know themselves and to develop healthy attitudes of self-acceptance. He goes on to reveal how many teachers lack meaning and a good self-concept in their own lives and are therefore unable to develop these traits in their students. As a teacher Joy seemed aware of this dual role of making education a meaningful experience for each of her students, while still maintaining her own sense of well being. At University, Joy 's stated beliefs in education for young children had earned her top grades. She came to her first teaching assignment with a thoroughly credible philosophy. She was willing to invest time and effort into getting to know the children and provide appropriate experiences.

In this study we will follow how Joy transformed her beliefs into a viable program during the following months.

The Experience of Getting A Job

Along with other graduating students, Joy prepared her resume and sent off applications in January, 1982. Needing to live in Edmonton so that her husband could finish his program at the U of A and feeling uncomfortable about driving, especially in winter, Joy restricted herself to applying only to Edmonton Public School Board.

During the first week of March she considered herself fortunate to be one of the few who were called in by Edmonton Public School Board for an initial interview.

> I thought the interview went well. I remember at the time thinking "oh no, my high marks are going to be detrimental because they (members on the interviewing team) commented to the effect that high marks mean you're an intellectual but you can't apply it" They met with me for twenty minutes and I wondered at the time how they could make decisions based on such a cursory interview. But I guess they're skilled at that sort of thing. (83.02.01)

Only a few students were offered contracts after this initial round of interviews, so Joy was not alone in anxiouisly awaiting some positive word.

> It was quite a while before I heard anything. A few of my friends heard in four or five days and were sent contracts in the mail. I guess it was the third week in March when I got a call to go for a second interview. They called it personality testing. Actually it was an in-depth interview for two hours. It was taped and scored against successful teachers scores. The interviewer said "I'd come through with flying colors and the only area I was low in was task completion." He said he'd let me know and then three weeks later there was a contract in the mail. It was an open contract. That means they contact you when they have a specific placement for you. I didn't hear anything more all spring. I'd asked for an internship[9] but didn't get one. (83.02.01)

In considering why she didn't get an internship, Joy rationalized that central office just didn't handle it too well, because they'd been offered to some students who didn't want them while she wanted one and didn't get it. There was no further word regarding a placement all summer.

> We were away on holidays from August 8 - 24 and when I got back there was still nothing. Then I got a notice about the "New Teacher Orientation Meeting" on September 1. (83.02.01)

On September 1, I met Joy at the orientation meeting and upon inquiring about where she was teaching, she replied with an air of confidence: "I don't know yet but I have a contract so I know I'll be teaching. I just don't know where yet. (82.09.01)

Later that day she had two interviews with a third as a possibility. At one school she was offered a one/two split, at the second a straight grade two class, while the third school had an opening in grade three. In reflecting on her decision that day,

> I was not that keen on a split grade but it would have been a real challenge. I guess they operated on a family grouping basis. There had been some personality conflicts between some of the parents and teacher last year so the principal was looking for a mature person that could handle a difficult situation. I felt honored to be asked. I was equally impressed by the two schools and the principals . . . One came across as very organized and efficient while the other was very relaxed and not too organized. I wondered what it would be like to work for each of them . . . (83.02.01)

Both schools were fairly close to her home, both positions interested her professionally. However, the deciding factor seems to have been very personal.

> . . . a good friend who I'd worked closely with last year at University and was newly married, really wanted this job so I thought if I took it I'd ruin a good friendship. (83.02.01)

So Joy took the grade two position at Notikewin.

As a young person Joy had not experienced a lot of friends, but in recent years she had come to value friendship very much. It was important to her not to destroy this one - and she did have another option open to her.

---

[9] Edmonton Public School Board provided four week paid internships in May for some of the new graduates to whom they had offered contracts.

Getting Oriented

The Experience of Getting Ready for School

With her position settled on the evening of September 1, school opening on Tuesday, September 7 was very close. Joy and her husband were going to be out of town over the long weekend, so that left Thursday and Friday to prepare.

A staff meeting took up all of Thursday morning, with the afternoon being spent getting oriented to the school and locating materials and furnishings to create a desirable environment.

> There was nothing in my classroom. I even had to scrounge in the storage rooms for furnishings. I got to take what was leftover. It sure would have helped to have an inventory of what was available. It took so much time." (82.09.03)

> Friday morning was spent arranging and rearranging her room,

> It's not how I want it yet, but I guess I'll have to settle for it this way for now. It'll be okay till Thanksgiving and then perhaps I'll change it." (82.09.03)

Early Friday afternoon I arrived to find Joy arranging supplies while her husband cut out letters for a display. Ralph continued with his task while Joy took me on a quick orientation tour of the school, introduced me to the principal, Mr. Eyben, and shared some of her initial feelings about her appointment. Although Joy appeared relatively calm that afternoon, she did express a number of concerns.

At the staff meeting on Thursday it had become clear that grade two and three had large enrolments and with the school population expected to grow as new housing developments were completed, there was a good possibility that she could have a two/three split. Joy was fearful she might be assigned the split "I'm not concerned that I couldn't handle it, but I just don't like the idea of shifting after the term starts." (82.09.03)

The lateness of her appointment left her with little time to review curriculum and created a conflict between wanting to focus most on the children and yet needing to familiarize herself with the curriculum.

> I'm not very familiar with the grade two curriculum so right now I'm doing a lot of guessing where to start planning. Once I'm familiar with the curriculum

> I'll be able to concentrate on the children. I think the children are so important." (82.09.03)

This also affected how she could work with her group:

> I'm so oriented to kindergarten and the centre approach. I want to provide an active learning environment but I don't know the grade two curriculum well enough to translate it into an activity oriented approach. So although I feel most comfortable working with small groups in centres, it just isn't a feasible alternative right now. I guess I'll have to settle for more large group time and seat work activities." (82.09.03)

In response to what her goals for the year were, Joy laughed and said,

> My first goal is to exist until Thanksgiving. Then I'll reassess how things are going. I'm going to break the year up into chunks because I can only cope with a small block of time at once. Several of my arrangements are still temporary. I hope to gradually move into more and more centres. I've got desks now but maybe I'll even get really radical and get rid of the desks." (82.09.03)

Her immediate focus was to work on classroom routines, help each child create a space for himself and find out where the children were. Her mornings would focus on language arts with her afternoons predominantly mathematics / science.

For Joy this assignment represented a lot of unknowns; what was the grade two curriculum, what could you expect of this age group, what were the school policies, what materials were provided and where could they be found? She knew how she wanted to organize her room, but all these unknowns were making an individualized activity approach nearly impossible. She started off her year with many compromises; whole group teaching versus small needs groups, seatwork versus manipulative activities, vague curriculum objectives versus thorough understanding of curriculum objectives, a somewhat bare classroom versus one that really portrayed a feeling for the program she hoped to develop. In *The Web and the Rock*, Thomas Wolfe speaks of the sense of failure man experiences if he is unable to use his talents.

> If a man has a talent and cannot use it, he has failed. If he has a talent and uses only half of it, he has partly failed. If he has a talent and learns somehow to use the whole of it, he has gloriously succeeded, and won a satisfaction and a triumph few men ever know. (Ch. 30).

Joy too experienced a sense of failure in that she was unable to find time to do so many of the things that she knew she was capable of.

The Experience of Meeting the Children

Even before the children arrived Joy expressed concern over how full (of furniture) the room seemed. "I don't think they designed these rooms for large classes." (82.09.09) Her original intent was to develop a space that would be pleasant to be in, as well as conducive to exchanging ideas and working effectively. She had arranged the twenty-eight desks in four concentric semi-circles facing the chalkboard. Three round tables hugged the walls while large cutout lettering designated a math / science area, a small group conference area and a language arts area. The teacher's desk and filing cabinet were in one corner with an open area left by the chalkboard for group gatherings. Individual cubbies just inside the door provided each child a place to keep his inside shoes, assorted treasures and various notes and papers to be taken home.

Strasser (1963) speaks of the environment as the world (in this case Joy's classroom) prior to human meaning being imposed upon it, whereas once human intention gives meaning to a space a "situation" is born. Joy intended the situation to be one where children would be free to interact and become actively involved in meaningful learning experiences. In a later section I shall follow the progress of how, in Joy's attempt to create a desirable learning situation, conflict arose between her desire for freedom for the children and her need for control.

Once the children entered there was a hum of activity, with children darting here and there, some chattering noisily, others quietly seeking out their own desks. Joy was an integral part of the situation. Not much taller than some of the children, she moved quietly around the room greeting individual children, occasionally squatting by a desk to communicate with a child at eye level. As she moved to the front of the room, her intense brown eyes scanned the classroom and a business-like expression settled on her face. Mrs. Misik, the new grade two teacher. What would she be like? Who was this stranger? A woman of twenty-seven, casually dressed with low-heeled shoes and glasses. She had medium brown hair softly curling around her face. She didn't smile much, but when she did, it looked as though she really liked the children.

By the third day of school there was evidence that the children in grade two were becoming aware of routines. When the bell went at 8:55, twenty-eight children filed into the classroom with many immediately beginning to put on their "inside shoes". A few were gently reminded by Joy that "outside shoes stay at the door and inside shoes go on in the school". Once they had settled in their desks they reviewed their "cooperation rules".

Prior to school starting, Joy stated her focus for the first week would be on establishing routines. These became known as "cooperation rules" because through cooperating and being considerate of each other everyone could accomplish what they were supposed to. For example the rule "to be considerate" referred to consideration of the custodian, of each other and of the teacher. In the ensuing discussion the children gave examples of "how picking up paper from the floor helped the custodian", "being quiet helped others do their work" and so forth.

Suransky (82.05.27) speaks of children becoming victims of structures set up by adults. If the child can't cope with the structure they "act out" and are frequently deemed deviant. One can certainly see by the nature of rules that Joy's children were being encouraged to develop, that they were directed at conforming to an overall structure that would contribute to a smoother running classroom and school. As part of an established system how much choice does a beginning teacher have in breaking from this structure? All children need some limits and guidance so how can you best provide these without destroying the child's right to have some effect on his own landscape?

Although Joy indicated that she believed children should be free to explore, to create and to be treated with dignity and respect, she did not view them as the creators of their own landscape. At least initially she saw that as very much her responsibility. However, within the landscape she had created, she tried to provide opportunities for the children to have some influence over their world. For example, in language arts Joy read "Caps for Sale" and then discussed with the class the things one could do with this story. "Make a play, make puppets, draw pictures, make costumes, do a finger play" were some of the suggestions. Even though each child was encouraged to suggest how he might be involved, the majority won out and in acting out "Caps for Sale" several children reveled in buying and selling caps while others quietly sat in their desks. Joy had established that the democratic process would be in effect. Everyone's idea would be considered while the most popular one would be acted upon. Later as the children labored over a worksheet it became obvious that some of the very children who had excelled at dramatization were unable to read the questions or print an answer, while others correctly finished the work in a few minutes.

Not only did the intellectual ability seem varied, behavior ranged from some very quiet, highly task oriented children, to those who were in constant motion mostly directed at disturbing others. Throughout the morning, Joy took a number of children aside individually and spoke quietly to them.

> It makes it hard for me to talk to the class when you make so much noise. Is there some way we can work this out Mel? There are times to work and times to be quiet. We need to help you sort them out. Would it help if I moved your desk so you wouldn't be bothered by others? (No response, a sullen look on Mel's face.) You mustn't bother others either. You can sit by yourself in here or I'll have to put you in the hall." (82.09.09)

Joy was experiencing difficulty in carrying on "teaching" activities when children were not listening, making noise and disturbing others. She wanted the children to realize that little could be accomplished unless each of them learned to be considerate of each other's need for quiet at certain times. However, the message she gave to Mel included some conflicting ideas. First it came across that it was to be a mutual decision (can *we* work this out?), then the onus was put on him (help *you* sort it out), then a suggested action (would it help?) and when no response was forthcoming an ultimatim (sit here or else in the hall). Joy worked hard at trying to get the children to understand what part their own behavior played in creating the problem and how they could help resolve it. Mel's lack of response pushed her into making a decision about appropriate punishment.

In a study on beginning teachers, Hay (1968) found that new teachers were more humanistic while experienced teachers were more custodial. One could speculate that first-year teachers are more idealistic and truly wish to involve children in decisions that affect their welfare. This was certainly true of Joy. She was groping for suitable methods of classroom management. Throughout the fall, although she was attempting to be loving and understanding, she found it didn't always work.

In the staff room at lunch time, the principal sat down beside Joy and jokingly asked, "How's Mrs. Frazzle doing?" He told her "to take heart" because he felt he'd have to shift some students from both the grade two and three classrooms but it would take time. His next statement was as much to me as Joy "That really goes against my philosophy - having such a big class for a beginning teacher." (82.09.09) During the first few weeks the principal frequently relieved Joy of her outdoor supervision and popped into her room from time to time to give her a break. As a way of keeping in touch with the kids and giving the teachers a break he took various classes for DUSO[10] or other activities once a week.

When I asked Joy how she felt the week had been going, she replied,

> I didn't feel Tuesday (first day of school) had gone so well, but the kids said it had been a good day. On Wednesday it started out pretty well but I felt my control dwindled throughout the day. It was not really bad. We've talked about cooperating and if it doesn't go better today I'm going to put them in rows. I don't want to but it's what they call getting mean. I've already changed the desks around to have boy/girl/boy/girl. I feel that each day is getting better. I'm trying to focus on routines this week. Perhaps next week there'll be more emphasis on self-management." (82.09.09)

Knowing some of the concerns she had regarding lack of familiarity with the grade two curriculum and inadequate materials, Joy came across to me as surprisingly confident. However, children are very astute at picking up uncertainty or hesitation in adults, so it is quite likely they sensed her underlying uneasiness about what were realistic expectations for grade two. Unable to clearly articulate her expectations for behavior and intellectual achievements at this point, some children saw this as an opportunity to pursue their own interests, which included chatting to neighbors, collecting erasers, wandering around the room, et cetera. This was a new situation for the children as well as Joy, and there was a lot of testing going on; what works, what's allowed, what will happen if . . .? In assessing her first few days, she felt that classroom management problems held the most significance for her.

Experiencing Notikewin Community and School

In a fast growing city, large tracts of land that only a few years ago were farmland, have been transformed into suburbia with the usual mix of mini-shopping centres, firestations and schools to service new families moving in daily. Notikewin Elementary School is located in such an area. Now in its second year of operation, it has more than doubled its population in one year. Such rapid growth can make staffing and long range planning a headache. "In order to accommodate this growth factor . . . reorganization of classes may be a possibility throughout the year." (Parent Handbook) Joy felt the impact of this before she even met her first class. At the very first staff meeting it had become obvious that the grade two and three populations were growing faster than expected and might necessitate a reorganization early in the fall.

---

[10] A kit with puppets and activities used to promote Developing Understanding of Self and Others (DUSO).

The families moving into this area include newly arrived immigrant families, middle class families aspiring to own their dream home, single parent families getting a new start, along with the nouveau riche establishing themselves in a mansion by the lake. Notikewin may be an atypical community in that accommodation ranges from subsidized housing to seven or eight hundred thousand dollar homes, resulting in the children attending the school having widely divergent background experiences and home lives. When asked if this mix posed any problems, the principal replied,

> No, the kids intermix and play with each other. We do have to be careful of financial demands. We try to have lots of activities that encourage mixing, like old fashioned picnics and family nights. We're moving towards community-at-large activities so the whole community can be involved. After all, they pay the taxes. (82.11.16)

Even though the principal indicated that the wide variation in income and cultural background posed no problems, an incident in Joy's room highlights the fact that various cultural groups may understand school policy differently as well as hold a wide range of expectations of the school.

In November, during parent-teacher interviews, a mother new to the school, with a minimal understanding of English proffered her son's report card from the year before. It clearly stated that Alex was to have been retained in grade one. It seems she had not understood the intention of the previous school. Although Joy realized Alex was having difficulty, it never occurred to her that he might be in the wrong grade. As a new teacher there were so many things to keep track of that it was late October before she was aware of his missing report card from the files.

Joy did find that financial requirements in field trips and a second pair of shoes did pose some awkwardness, as a few parents just couldn't, or wouldn't, afford it. There seemed to be wide discrepancy in the amount of parent help and interest, although she couldn't attribute it to any specific groupings. However, she did find children from similar backgrounds seemed to work and play together more.

The principal placed great importance on parent and community satisfaction with the school and was pleased with the positive results of the School Survey[11] in the spring.

---

[11] In the Spring of 1982, the Edmonton Public School Board conducted school surveys throughout the city. Results of each school were tabulated and returned to the school as one way of evaluating whether or not they were meeting community expectations.

His emphasis on parent/community involvement not only provided opportunity for informal school community exchange, but also placed expectations on his staff to be involved in family nights, concerts and so forth.

The 1982-83 Parent Handbook describes the basic program for Notikewin Elementary as,

> All courses offered at Notikewin School are recommended by Alberta Education and approved by The Edmonton Public School Board. Classes are self-contained and an integrated and activity-oriented approach is encouraged.
>
> Each classroom is comprised of students with various abilities, interests and achievement levels. Teachers are expected to group and/or re-group in such a manner as to facilitate a challenging, interesting learning situation to enable pupils to reach their potential. Various teaching styles will be practised and all students will be exposed to the basic core for their grade, and their ultimate pass or fail will depend upon the degree of mastery of this core. Enrichment will be offered to those who progress beyond this core.[12]

Parent interest in and support of the school is high. In a school board sponsored survey done in May 1982, the parents indicated a high degree of satisfaction with all aspects of the school program. A Parent-Teacher Advisory Association provides a channel of communication and liaison between staff and parents, and is actively involved in cooperatively planned family nights and other activities where parents, children and teachers interact socially. Parents are encouraged to come to the school to discuss their children's progress.

> Although parent-teacher conferences are scheduled following the first and second report cards, we welcome parental contact, either by phone or in person, whenever there are concerns or a need for information to be shared regarding the welfare and progress of your child." (School Handbook for Parents 1982-83)

Within the first few weeks several parents had met with Joy. "Quite a few parents have been in to chat about their child - some set appointments - some just came. Yesterday I used my whole prep time talking to parents." (82.09.15) Parents clearly felt the school was approachable and valued education enough to be concerned about their child's progress.

The current school year began with seven classroom teachers assisted by a full time librarian/resource room teacher, a part-time music teacher, a principal/counselor and a full-time program aide. In December an eighth teacher was added to alleviate large numbers in the grade two and three classrooms.

---

[12] Each school in the study prepared a Parent Handbook that briefly described the philosophy of the school and provided information on school hours and policies related to home-school contacts.

In staffing a new school the principal felt one of the real advantages was being able to choose your own staff. He looked for

> . . . people who will have good rapport with kids, colleagues, and parents. If parents are happy with what's happening at school, that's 90% of it. I also looked at applicant's academic and curriculum background as well as their individual philosophies. I didn't want one philosophy, rather people with different strengths and philosophies that were willing to share ideas - good team workers. Some principals get all leaders and the school just breaks apart. Every teacher needs to feel he belongs and has some power." (82.11.16)

The entire staff at Notikewin were willingly involved in family nights, concerts and open houses, although one did object to parent-teacher conferences after supper. There were varied philosophies held with some teachers working in quite a formal, traditional way while others implemented an activity approach with learning centres. Some involved parents in their ongoing activities, others did not. There seemed to be a genuine acceptance for "doing things your own way".

In talking about adding new staff members to an existing staff the principal expressed the following policy:

> As a staff, we sat down together to look at needs of the school and how we could add to the staff and get new ideas. I saw a new graduate like Joy as a positive move. New out of University she'd have new ideas and then I could break her into the system the way I wanted." (82.11.16)

The principal was impressed with Joy's credentials and enthusiastically shared her university achievements with the parents at family night. Contrary to his statement about "breaking her into the system", he seemed to practise non-interference and provided a supportive atmosphere in which Joy could develop her program in her own way.

The newness of the area is immediately apparent as one approaches a low brown brick structure located at one side of a large dirt field, a Canadian flag bravely flying above the one grassy spot. Upon entering the front door, the usual portrait of the Queen, dedication plaque, and display case were rivaled by two Murray MacDonald[13] paintings. Going through the main office one comes to the principal's elegantly fitted-out domain with drapes, plush chairs and chandelier. The staff room had the usual cluster of work tables surrounded by chairs and a couple of couches. At one end a kitchenette featuring a stove, fridge, dishwasher and microwave enabled staff lunches to range from brown bag sandwiches to elaborate soup and entree concoctions. The entire school was tastefully decorated and spotlessly maintained.

---

[13] Murray MacDonald was a former Edmonton Public School Board art supervisor and had participated in the school opening a few months earlier.

The staff, children and parents displayed considerable pride in their school and its activities. At the bi-monthly assemblies the principal frequently encouraged and commended good school behavior. The parents seemed to feel p[illegible] of the school and shared in its glories. After the Christmas concert I overheard the following conversation,

> Dad 1 "Hey this is really great isn't it?
>
> Dad 2 "Yeah, it's better than last year. By next year we can have ITV come over to televise it.

Experiencing the First Week

During Joy's first week a number of problems seemed to surface. Some of these persisted throughout much of the year. Others disappeared after a while.

Exhaustion

"Exhausted" was a word that came up often in describing those first few days.

> I'm so exhausted at the end of the day I can't concentrate on preparing the details for the next one. I've been taking the manuals and books home and do my preparation in the evenings. Then I have to bring all the materials back in the morning. (82.09.09)

The first few days in any new job require considerable adjustment as one becomes familiar with the people, the routines and the expectations. In Joy's case she had twenty-nine children to get to know, as well as the school staff and a number of parents who came in. With approximately half of the children new to the school, they were just getting to know each other, making it even more difficult to develop some group cohesiveness within the class. In addition to becoming familiar with the routines and expectations of the school, Joy was trying to establish appropriate routines and expectations within her own classroom. At the end of a school day Joy was drained of energy and needed some rest and relaxation. However, there was this grade two curriculum to become familiar with. She needed to know what the objectives were so that she could plan for the next day. Instead of taking time off to relax in the evenings, she felt compelled to go through guides and manuals and do her planning. Although she felt prepared, this resulted in her being even more tired as she faced the next day. It is little wonder she needed breaks from the children:

> Ray (principal) came in and relieved me for twenty minutes yesterday. I just used the time to recoup.
>
> Sometimes I find I just have to have a moment to be quiet so I turn the lights out and have the children put their heads on their desks.
>
> I try to take a break at noon and during my prep time to gain renewed vigor and outlook. (82.09.09)

Fortunately for Joy, she had a principal who was sensitive to her needs and provided some time for her to get away from the ongoing demands of the classroom, and outdoor supervision. She was also wise enough to take advantage of these opportunities to "gain renewed vigor."

Later she spoke of different kinds of exhaustion.

> The first day when I went home I was physically exhausted. On the second day I was mentally exhausted. I find I can't really think too clearly about what long range plans I want. I have to work late just getting ready for the next day." (82.09.09)

Lack of Familiarity with Grade Two Curriculum and Materials

There were the grade two provincial curriculum guides in all the subject areas as well as guide books and texts in reading, math, language and science with which to become familiar. A quick perusal gave some idea of what was expected, but to gain a thorough understanding of general goals and specific objectives required some careful study. Although Joy was taking home materials every night she couldn't seem to grasp the totality of the curriculum. At the end of the first week she was still expressing concern over her lack of familiarity with the grade two curriculum. This meant she was planning activities "that seemed about right for grade two" not really knowing if they fit the overall objectives. Without knowing the curriculum she was unable to get any long-range planning done and so she didn't have a feeling for where she was going. Without an overall picture of what she was expected to cover she couldn't integrate subjects into meaningful learning experiences. All this uncertainty about curriculum expectations kept her from focusing on the children.

> I can't emphasize how important it is to me to know the curriculum and to be prepared. I feel that releases my energy so much more to work with the children. If I know my stuff and I'm prepared, then I feel I can get on with the work that's really important. (83.02.24)

Lack of Adequate Supplies

Another problem was the lack of materials. The supplies (textbooks and workbooks) for grade two were not in yet. Apparently it hadn't been known how many grade two's to expect and so nothing had been ordered. Joy was trying to go through sample copies of reading, math and science books to see which ones she would order. However, it still could be a few weeks before they'd be available. This resulted in Joy's having to fall back on her own resources in terms of planning activities. With no workbooks in mathematics, Joy started a unit on time that she'd prepared while student teaching. She made up work assignments, copied worksheets from the sample workbooks, and tried to involve the children in concrete experiences. With only ten readers for twenty-nine children she found it difficult to provide reading activities for the whole group at once. Later in the year when she knew her class better she commented in retrospect

> They sat in groups of three with the middle one holding the book. No wonder I had management problems. Kids were sitting together that could read and couldn't read. Some were reading three pages ahead and some couldn't even read the first sentence. (83.05.16)

During those first few days she only knew that she had twenty-nine children to keep busy. Even if she divided them into the proverbial three reading groups, what did she do with two-thirds of them while she read with ten? There were no workbooks, she hadn't been able to establish any centres and could they work by themselves anyway? She found she had to draw heavily on her own ideas for reading materials and activities to keep them busy.

Inappropriate Materials

As Joy became more familiar with the grade two curriculum, guide books and workbooks, she found there was much that was not appropriate for the way she wanted to work with her class. For example, the math workbook was very abstract and she had already found her group responded better to manipulative materials. "The problem with manipulative materials is assembling and/or making them. It's so time consuming." (82.09.09)

Joy had some idea about the kind of activities and materials she wanted, but was frustrated by her inability to find time to either locate them or be able to make suitable ones.

Lack of Time

"Time" was a very precious commodity to Joy and she was feeling some conflict about how to best utilize it.

> Sometimes I feel really pressured to get all my preparation done, get through the guides, collect materials, and still meet my social responsibilities. My husband's been on his own ever since I got my position. He has been really good to help me but with University starting he'll have his own studying to do." (82.09.09)

In addition to professional demands on her time, she was experiencing a desire not to neglect her personal responsibilities. How could she make the best use of her time? Was it better to stay right at the school until seven or eight and then go home for supper and take some work home to do, or was it better to go home for supper early, say five o'clock, and then come back to the school and work until nine or ten? In the first plan she had a little more time at home, but it meant carrying all those manuals back and forth from school. On the other hand, it was nice to keep her work at school and have home as a retreat from work where she and her husband could have some time together.

Individual Differences

Prior to meeting her class Joy had voiced many concerns related to her unfamiliarity with the curriculum and being unable to create the type of environment in which she could work best. Once she met her students, another whole realm of concerns emerged. She immediately felt the impact of numbers. How could she ever really get to know twenty-nine individuals?

> I try to write notes on the children at night but it's hard to remember. During the day it's hard to get stuff down cause there's never paper and pencil handy and I always seem to get intercepted before I reach my desk. Some of the children finish so fast and others are so slow." (82.09.09)

It soon became obvious to Joy that one of the children couldn't speak English, several couldn't read and a number were in constant motion - going to their cubbies, talking to others, or putting their shoes on or off. She had expected individual differences, but "weren't grade twos supposed to be able to read?" (82.09.09)

Classroom Management

By the third day of school Joy commented "I'm having trouble with classroom management . . . The numbers are hard to handle." (82.09.09) Later that morning she kept Mel and Stan back from music and talked to them about their behavior and the need for them to take responsibility for their own actions or for her to lay out alternatives if they didn't. "You must not bother others. You can sit by yourself in here or I'll have to put you in the hall." (Mel's response to her admonition was "I know. You just don't like me.") (82.09.09)

During group time the next week Stan was continually shouting out answers, nudging others and squirming. Joy sent him back to his desk and interrupted the group discussion to talk about "one's actions and the consequences". At his desk Stan played with his ruler, pencil, sorted through things in his desk and continued to talk out loud, sometimes related to the discussion, sometimes not. After several stern glances in his direction failed to affect his behavior, Joy asked him to sit in the hall. At recess while talking to Stan Joy said,

> I'm concerned about your behavior. What things are causing you trouble?
> S. I only like science. I told you.
> J. There's a science room. Maybe we could go to it sometime and do some work.
> S. I don't like science at school . . .
> J. What things do you have to do at home?
> S. I never have to do anything at home.
> J. Well, there are twenty-nine children here. If you had twenty-nine at home -
> S. I'd close the door so I'd have some privacy.
> J. Would it help if we made a private place for you?
> S. That would be embarrassing.
> J. Let's make an agreement for this afternoon -" (82.09.15)

Joy always remained calm in encounters like this and worked hard at trying to come up with a solution that was acceptable to both parties. She usually took the child aside privately, spoke to him about the effect his behavior was having on her and/or the class, and encouraged him to participate in a decision about how the unacceptable behavior could be modified to the satisfaction of all involved. If an agreement could not be reached, they usually visited the principal's office for further deliberations.

Joy often spoke of being exhausted that first week. It's little wonder when one considers her strong desire to get to know and understand the children coupled with her strong need to know what she was expected to cover and be prepared to teach it. There just never seemed to be enough time. If she worked on daily plans first there was little time left to study the curriculum guides and make notes on the children. If she chose to reverse the order there was the danger she might not have things ready for morning. Not to be ready for the next day would just add to the already stressful situation of keeping nearly thirty children busy in a meaningful way.

Joy's determination to provide the best possible experience she could for those children got her through that first week, but she didn't get much satisfaction from the experience.

Becoming Established

Relationships With Children

In Joy's written philosophy she stated that "children are individuals who need to be considered as a whole . . . need to be guided, cherished, respected,loved . . ." (82.12.02) In her classroom, Joy introduced several activities aimed at enabling the children and herself to get to know each other better and value each one's special interests and abilities. Joy was almost always at the door to greet the children when they arrived for class and used the settling-in time as an opportunity to go around and talk to each one about whatever seemed to be needed "- a reminder, a question, a comment.

Her first theme of the year was "I Am Special" and focused on getting the children to consider how they were special, how others are special, as well as attempting to instill a consideration of each person's uniqueness.

Leo Buscaglio[14] sees developing each person's uniqueness as the major aim of education.

> Education should be the process of helping everyone discover his uniqueness, to teach him how to develop that uniqueness, and then to show him how to share it because that's the only reason for having anything.

---

[14] Leo Buscaglio, Professor of Education at the University of Southern California, travels extensively giving lectures on the role of love and self understanding in education.

> Imagine what this world would be like if all along the way you had people say to you, "It's good that you're unique; it's good that you're different. Show me your differences so that maybe I can learn from them." (1972, p. 20)

In Joy's room each child was recognized as an important individual with special attention focused on him for a week. This activity consisted of a bulletin board display where the "Name of the Week" person could write a letter to the class telling about her special interests, her family, and post pictures and special collectibles that would help the class get to know her as a person. Throughout the week, classmates were encouraged to write letters to the person telling her something special they liked about her. As well as putting students in touch with each other this activity provided a meaningful writing experience for the children.

Letters were acknowledged, usually in written form, as a way of demonstrating one role of written communication. In one letter to Mrs. Misik on "her week" Ronnie wrote, *"Do you no how you are speshell? You are nice, intellagent. And a good teaicher But I and other pepal woude like to get farter in to sciens. Love Ronnie."* In her reply, Mrs. Misik thanked Ronnie for his letter and went on to say, *"I know you are interested in science . . . Please write to tell me what kind of science you are most interested in so that I can plan for some more science activities."* Ronnie's reply, *"I woude like to work with Dinosours and spase."* (82.10.28)

Teacher comments on children's work provided encouragement and guidance. *Nice work Ralph. Give a little more space between your numbers and words." (82.09.24)*

The last day of each month was set as a special day for those who'd celebrated birthdays that month, for Joy felt "it's important for kids to have some special attention for their birthday". (82.09.30)

As soon as her placement was known Joy had expressed concern over how she could both familiarize herself with the curriculum and really get to know the children during the first few days of school. With twenty-nine children she found herself resorting to whole class activities at the recommendation of other teachers, and putting aside her own desire to work with small groups. She was surprised by the range of abilities. In response to assignments some children could read the directions, completing the activity quickly and correctly. Others were not able to read at all, while still others appeared able to do the work but incapable of settling down.

There was such a range of abilities and so many behavior problems, and so many children. However, a ray of hope existed for Joy during those first weeks. It was the proposal to split the class by the end of September. Although she tried hard to provide worthwhile experiences for everyone in her class, there seemed to be an underlying reluctance to invest a lot of time and effort in a group that could be moved to another class any day. Within the first week several parents had met with Joy, and although she felt "You get a lot of information about the children," she seemed to wonder what was the point if she wouldn't be working with them. ". . . . in some ways it's bad if they're going to be moved." (82.09.15)

Apparently Joy was not the only one who questioned why some of the children were there.

> Four or five parents felt their children were not really ready for grade two and wanted to know if I felt they were. I don't really know where they should be but I think grade two's should be able to read." (82.09.24)

September 22 was a real low point for Joy. At the staff meeting it was announced there would be no split after all. With a number of housing projects due for completion within the next few months, the principal felt it was more important to retain the option of adding another teacher until later in the year. Joy's immediate reaction to the announcement was,

> Well, it had been a horrible week . . . I was exhausted and frustrated. I could have wept. I waited for my opinion to be asked . . . everyone else wanted to wait cause it meant $4,000 per month for the school . . . All eyes were on me and Ray said, "We're waiting for you Joy." So I just said "Well it's not an ideal situation and I'm not happy with it. I'm frustrated, I don't think the kids are getting their personal needs met and I don't see with that number of kids and the mixture - the behavior mixture that I have, that I can promote a real positive learning environment because they have no room to move, no room to do any active type learning and that's what some of those kids really need because they are so active. I'm aware of what I really should be doing for them and yet I can't do it so I'm not happy with it. I'm feeling very discouraged and low and yet I have to accept what is for the good of the whole school. I am a new teacher but I feel it's important for those kids to have the best environment." They thought I was very idealistic and that didn't help how I was feeling. (82.09.30)

That weekend Joy made time to go through her children's records.

> It reconfirmed some of my feelings and concerns about some of the children. (Eight of the students were at a pre-primer reading level, two were not reading at all and one was unable to speak English. At the other end of the continuum one child showed brilliance in scientific areas, another had been recommended for enrichment, while parents of a third were seeking acceleration for their son. Several of the children had been recommended

> for Bureau testing because of behavior problems.) The grade one teacher let a lot of children go on with very low skill levels. (82.09.25)

It had been recommended that two of the children stay in grade one, however, the parents had chosen to place them in grade two. In one case the parents had gone to the associate superintendent for permission, while in the other, the parents had promised to get remedial tutoring for their son over the summer holidays. Unable to function in the grade two program, too low in reading achievement for the resource room and with Joy unable to spend extra time with them, it was decided the parents of these two children should be called in. The principal explained the situation and recommended that the parents consent to having their child placed in grade one or consider transferring the child to another school. One family chose to have their child go to a grade one class in the school while the other family transferred their child to a grade one class at a neighboring school.

After a particularly heated interview Joy and the principal had with one of the families, that went on for two and one half hours on a Friday evening, the principal, grade one teacher, resource room teacher and Joy stayed on to discuss how to best provide for the children's varied needs in Joy's class. Joy shared her feelings in this way:

> . . . I felt I wasn't able to do much with individual children because I had so many and such a range of needs . . . I just popped the idea of having an aide and Ray said "he'd certainly consider it". On Monday, Bonnie, who works as an aide around the school, was assigned to me half time - one and a half hours in the morning and one and a half in the afternoons. (82.09.82)

In addition to now having an aide, the eight pre-primer readers were assigned to the resource room teacher one hour per day. On September 30 I had made a note "Class seems much quieter today. Four out to resource room. Joy seems much more relaxed. Her voice is lower, she's joked and laughed with the class." (82.09.31)

Even though the hoped-for split had not occurred, it seemed the alternative arrangements had given Joy a new lease on life. She was getting to know individual children better now and making definite steps to provide for different needs.

> I've referred three children to the Bureau. That was another interesting experience to phone up the parents in order to get permission to have them referred. Most of the parents were quite willing because they know their children have problems. I sort of thought about it and the way I phrased it was that I wanted to plan for them the best possible program for the coming year. In order to assess their strengths and weaknesses I felt I should have some specialized testing done . . . I met with some resistance on the part of one (parent) cause this is the third time her son had been referred so she was wondering when this was going to stop and maybe we should be putting him

> in a special program if he's having so much trouble . . . The Bureau people come out to the school and I've indicated to the parents that after the testing we'll have a conference with them to resolve any questions. (82.09.30)

Much of Joy's frustration in the first few months was related to her inability to do the things she felt were needed for individual children. As she became more aware of individual children's needs, she felt thwarted by her greater need to read through guides, plan, mark, and keep the class running as a whole. Although she firmly believed each child must be made to feel special and worthwhile, she found herself with little time to devote to individual children. "If I could only spend five or ten minutes with each child each week - but it just doesn't seem possible." (82.10.25)

Although she continued to experience difficulty in finding time to be with individuals, she came up with a workable alternative. In January each child started keeping his own journal. Two or three times a week they would write about things they had done the night before, or their favorite things, or something that had upset them or pleased them. Joy felt the journals were almost like a private time with each child:

> They've included some interesting things. Like Mel's been going to a counsellor and his journal really sensitized me to what he was experiencing. It's also sensitized me to how they're feeling about themselves so I can care for them in a more loving way. (83.02.01)

Sometimes she wrote responses, other times it enabled her to respond to a child in a more appropriate manner. She was finally beginning to feel she was in touch with her children.

Joy was aware of the children's needs and was trying to find ways to meet them. However, teachers have needs that must be met too. In relation to the children, Joy's greatest need was to establish an effective system of classroom management so that instruction and learning could take place. She worked hard at trying to positively reinforce those behaviors that were consistent with her expectations.

> I've been trying to give positive reinforcement but it really plays me out trying to watch all the time." (82.09.24)

Tiring or not, every day in Joy's room one frequently heard the following types of comments:

> I really like the way Mandy, John and Tim remember to put their hands up. In this class we put our hand up when we have something to contribute." (82.09.30)

I like to see Jessica sitting up so nicely. Thank you Jessica." (82.09.30)

While engaged in seatwork activities the children were allowed to chat quietly about what they were doing, borrow pencils, erasers, or crayons from classmates or a supply on a shelf. Sometimes what started out as a task-related exchange turned into a noisy, off-topic interaction, especially with five or six children, and the general noise level would rise considerably. "Lights out" signalled quiet and pay attention to the teacher. If, after a warning to settle down, children continued to wander aimlessly or talk noisily, different disciplinary techniques were used. Sometimes the children lost minutes off story-time which usually came during the last fifteen or twenty minutes of the day. Other times, the class was asked to put their heads on their desks and a timer was set for one or two minutes of absolute quiet time. Fridays became "Better Than Ever Friday" with each child setting a goal for himself, (eg. I will try to be more quiet. I will put my hand up before talking.) printing it on a file card attached to his desk, and being rewarded by a star if the teacher caught him working towards it.

On September 30 as Joy waited for the class to quiet down so they could go to gym, the noise level just got louder and louder. I'd made the following entry in my notes, "Sometimes I wish Joy would yell at them, or at least raise her voice. She is always so positive and pleasant and quiet." (82.09.30) However, by December, her approach seemed to be winning them over. "I'm looking at someone who isn't looking at me." She gave a group of children who were chatting a grim look and waited a moment, then lights off and almost instant quiet. "I can't tell you how pleased I am at how well you respond to my signal and listen so well. You're making my fantasy[15] come true." Mel glowed like he was personally responsible for her fantasy coming true. (82.12.01) As Joy became more familiar with the curriculum and was able to feel better planned for each day, she found the discipline problems lessened.

> Now I can get my mind on the kids. I've been frustrated all along that I couldn't focus on the kids but rather the problems. They're so interrelated. If everything was all set up and I could go bang, bang, bang, the kids knew I meant business - if I hesitated at all the kids sensed it and behavior problems arose. The more disruptive the class, the harder it was to carry on. (82.10.12)

While most of the children readily accommodated to the teacher's expectations of acceptable behavior, several found it extremely difficult. Although I had observed a number of outbursts of erratic behavior, it was brought home much more vividly to me one afternoon when, as participant observer, I was helping out in a craft activity. The children were making mailboxes. I had the stapler and was taking it around to children who were ready to use it. Mel had left his desk and kept pushing in front of a girl cutting, clamoring to use the stapler which was in use. I said "Just a minute Mel." He persisted pushing and nudging the little girl, so I put my hand on his shoulder and quietly said "Just wait for your turn." Mel flung out his arm to rid himself of my hand, picked up a chair and threw it on the floor. (82.09.30)

---

[15] Earlier in a discussion of fantasies, the class had decided hers would be to have a perfectly behaved class.

Outbursts like this occurred regularly with Mel. A couple of weeks later after Joy had patiently worked through yet another encounter with Mel I couldn't resist asking "Don't you ever feel like screaming?" J. "Yes, all the time." L. "I've really marvelled that you never have over the weeks." J. "If I started I might never stop." We arrived at the staffroom at that point and the teacher's aide commented "Maybe you should. It might startle them into silence." J. "No, I find it's better to talk to them individually. Just whisper quietly in their ear." The resource room teacher replied, "Oh if I got that close to some of them I might bite their ears right off." (82.11.16) However, Joy felt that it was important for her to model the behavior she expected, so if she resorted to yelling at the children that would indicate that yelling was acceptable in the classroom with the overall noise level going up rather than down.

Several children in Joy's class were considered behavior problems by other teachers in the school. One day in the staff room as teachers were going over their newly assigned "family groups"[16] the following comments were made: Teacher A "Oh, I've got Stan." Teacher B (with a groan) "I've got Blayne." Teacher C "Oh no, I've got Mel and Sammy." Joy "I've got all those kids all the time." Teacher B "I don't know how you can stand it." (82.10.22)

To Joy each child was special. Perhaps this is "how she could stand it".

> How you come across to the kids is what is really important to me. You have to be prepared to really love the kids as they are even the Sammy's and Mels. You have to appreciate the privilege of being with the kids.

---

[16] All children in the school are assigned to a "family" of mixed ages and grades. They do several activities throughout the year as a "family" under the supervision of a teacher.

Upon reflecting how she came to hold this belief she credited one of her early childhood professors with really influencing her.

> That's when I really began to feel powerfully about kids because she was so empathetic to children and the privilege of being with kids . . . stressed how important it is to really care about kids . . . Now that I'm more aware I hear it again and again from many people in many places and being with the children and realizing you have an impact - that's pretty powerful . . . You realize how fragile they are and how important their teacher is to them. You're with those kids hour in and hour out, day after day so you might as well invest something in them . . . I'm enriching those kids lives and they're enriching mine." (83.02.26)

Early on Joy felt she had some management problems but she steadfastly resisted any temptation to resort to harsh treatment, sarcasm or yelling. She persisted in her method of calmly talking things through, forcing children to think about their behavior, its effect on others, and how they could behave in a more acceptable way. Although the results were not immediate, gradually the children became quieter, more task oriented and thoughtful of others.

By February, Joy was finding that her classroom was running much more smoothly with the children showing "a lot more cooperativeness" and "now they really know when they've done something that's not appropriate." (83.02.01) Although she seemed to have established fairly good control, Joy was not really comfortable with her approach.

> I've really been getting the children to do things for outside reinforcement rather than because they wanted to. At the beginning of the year I was just trying anything that I thought would work. (83.05.16)

Even though Joy had been trying to reward positive behavior and ignore undesirable behavior, comments such as, "I like the way Mandy's sitting," had the effect of alerting the class to note how Mandy was sitting and do likewise, because that was what the teacher rewarded. Joy began to see this as more manipulative than positive, and somewhere in March/April she began to consciously change her approach.

> Now when someone has done something, like finished their work, I'll go to them and ask how they feel about it. They might reply they feel good about it and I'd say I feel good too when I've done something well. This way I'm trying to reinforce their feeling good about their own accomplishments and not just doing things or the teacher's sake. (83.05.16)

As the children began to take a greater pride in their own behavior and accomplishments, Joy was left with more time and energy to develop meaningful learning experiences for them. Buscaglia (1972) criticizes "teachers with being too busy *managing* to be *creating*." In the fall that was true of Joy, but by March, classroom management was under control and she and her children were free to "create".

Relationships With Parents

In the school handbook parents are invited to contact the school ". . . either by phone or in person, whenever there are concerns or a need for information to be shared regarding the welfare or progress of your child."

Some parents were quick to pick up on this invitation and early in September several contacted Joy to discuss their child's placement, problems, interests, along with their own concerns and aspirations for their children. Perhaps the rumor of a possible split kept the parents checking in more often than usual to keep abreast of what was happening to their child. "Would he/she be moving, or staying with Joy? What about his co-conspirator, would he be going too?" Although, these interviews took precious time from planning and preparation, Joy rarely seemed upset or disturbed by them. In fact she saw them as useful opportunities to gain information about the children, and share her aspirations for the class with the parents.

On October 6, a "Meet the Parent" night was scheduled at Notikewin. It began as a social evening with families bringing a favorite dessert to share in the gym as parents, children and teachers mingled freely. New families to the school were identified by red name tags while staff and the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) executives were introduced early in the evening. At 7:30 the children were entertained with cartoons while parents went to appropriate classrooms to hear what the teachers had planned for their children that year. Just as Joy was about to begin, Ray came in and enthusiastically shared some of Joy's qualifications with the parents, spoke of the difficulties of providing for individual needs with 29 children in the class, and announced the plan to split the class within the near future, taking nine or ten good workers from each of the grade two and three classes and establishing a combined 2/3 class. After fielding numerous questions Ray left and Joy began her presentation on what educational experiences she had planned for the year and how she hoped they could work together to provide the best possible year for each child.

Joy clearly outlined her expectations in each of the curriculum areas, commented on activities the children were involved in at school as well as suggested a variety of ways the parents could be involved at home. She spoke in a fluent, well modulated voice, avoided educational jargon and enlivened her talk with humor. She came across as competent, concerned and very approachable.

In December when I commented on Joy's effective presentation and questioned what she'd attribute her ease in handling this evening to, she replied,

> Talking to groups has never frightened me. As far as my program goes I really believe in what I'm doing and I've got a good background in theory and philosophy. I like to come across positively to parents. (82.12.01)

On another occasion when she was speaking about her experience prior to her B.Ed. program, she said, "I think it's made a difference with parents. I don't have any qualms in dealing with parents." (83.01.18)

As well as speaking eloquently about her program, Joy was faced with some potentially difficult conferences when she approached parents to gain permission for special Bureau testing, and had to provide a convincing rationale for why some children would be better off in a grade one classroom. In each instance Joy seemed able to explain to the satisfaction of the parents the reasons for the proposed action.

Joy believed communication with the parents should be two-way. She welcomed the parents contacting her, but she also took the initiative to contact them for clarification of points, to share good and bad news, and with suggestions for help at home. When the split classroom became a reality, she did not rely on the letter home from the office to convey the news. The evening before the move found her contacting the parents of every child concerned to insure they were aware of what was happening and to clear up any questions.

Report cards went out in the middle of November, with all parents requested to come in for a fifteen minute conference. Joy found fifteen minutes generally wasn't long enough so "I've scheduled some for half an hour because I've got a lot to discuss with them. Others just become a social chat if there are no problems." (82.11.25) Twenty-nine fifteen to thirty minute conferences added on to regular teaching days made this a long week. By Thursday evening, when the staff had decided to reward themselves by going out for a late dinner, Joy was ". . . so tired I couldn't even eat." (82.11.26)

Early in January Joy was suddenly rushed to the hospital where a three day stay gave her time

> . . . to sit back and think about what I'd been doing . . . came to realization that there's *only so much I can do* and a lot of it rests in the home, and a lot of it rests on the child's responsibility . . . Perhaps the most important thing I can give them is assurance that what they do here is OK if they're trying . . . They're still young - some of them are six and seven, some eight but they're still awfully young. We're asking them to make these great big conceptual leaps of moving from concrete, manipulative experiences to abstract, paper and pencil activities, and some of them just aren't ready for that . . . I'm trying to put a little more emphasis on what's happening at home - parent involvement. Sure all those parents can't come into my classroom during the day, but they're all with their kids some part of the day . . . So I'm sending home a letter each week outlining ways parents can help their kids with spelling, their math facts . . .
>
> In lots of ways it really goes against what I feel about homework . . . it doesn't have to be drill or homework. It could be a game . . . try to give them something constructive to do with their kids - extend school learning. (83.01.18)

Joy was most anxious that she and the parents form a meaningful partnership that will benefit the child. She recognized that it was very idealistic to expect all parents would have the time and/or interest to help their children at home, so she hoped that the parents who volunteered to come into the classroom could spend extra time with them.

When I asked if she would have the parent volunteers help prepare materials, she replied "I'm not organized enough now. I have to come back in the evenings and do that." (83.01.18) By March Joy was finding it ". . . a great help to have parent volunteers laminate and photo copy materials for class." (83.03.31) She was also pleased to have parents coming in on Tuesdays and Thursdays to help out in her learning centres. "I couldn't operate the centres without the extra help." (83.03.31)

The weekly letter had evolved from a listing of goals and suggestions for extending these at home, into an accounting of progress being made and a sharing of highlights of the week. "Most parents seem to be helping out and it's working quite well. I guess I never hear about those that don't." (83.03.31)

Transforming the Environment into a Human Situation

Each fall teachers across the country face barren classrooms. Many come with years of experience and a wealth of material that enables them to readily transform this barren space into the atmosphere they wish. Others, like Joy, are new to teaching and are facing this task for the first time.

Upon her appointment just days before school opening, Joy stated, "I want to provide an active learning environment but I don't know the grade two curriculum well enough to translate it into an activity-oriented approach." (82.09.03)

This was a conflict that remained with Joy all fall. Gradually, she became familiar with the grade two curriculum, but then there was the problem of space. Initially she arranged the twenty-nine desks in four concentric circles but found it difficult to move around in the classroom and the juxtaposition of children posed too great a temptation to interfere with each other. By the second week she had rearranged the desks in a fan shape facing the chalkboard which enabled freer movement around the room and still allowed space for a total group gathering at the front. This did cut down students bothering each other somewhat. By the fourth week the children were moving their desks into groupings of four for small group activities for part of the day.

Her classroom was also beginning to reflect the personality of its inhabitants, with a display of "special artifacts" the children had brought in, along with displays of artwork and one or two-line stories the children had produced covering the tackboard walls.

Thanksgiving signalled a major change in Joy's room. On Tuesday, October 12, the class was split in the mornings with ten children going to a combined two/three class for language arts and then coming back in the afternoons for math, science and social studies. This was seen as a temporary arrangement that could change within a week or two or might continue indefinitely. The uncertainty affected the entire staff. If it were only going to be a week or two, was it worth altering the music, library, resource room and gym schedules? On the other hand if the split was to continue for several months, it was important that these children be accommodated in the special classes. Joy wasn't sure if she should go ahead and make changes within her classroom or just wait.

> If this half day thing only goes on two weeks I'd wait, but it could go on the rest of the year. It's all because Ray wants Mrs. Wadsworth and she's not on contract with Edmonton Public School Board. He's hoping that if she's already here half time, he'll be able to work it into a full-time position. It's upset the whole staff. It's nice to pick your staff, but I think kids should be the priority. (82.10.12)

As far as the principal was concerned, he was considering the interests of the children. He felt none of the surplus teachers[17] were as suited to teach a split primary grade as Mrs.

---

[17] Teachers holding contracts with Edmonton Public School Board but not having been placed were termed "surplus". Board policy required that all "surplus" staff be placed before other teachers could be hired.

Wadsworth, so he felt justified in holding out for her.

Joy decided to go ahead and make some changes in her room over the Thanksgiving weekend. With ten desks moved to the other classroom, this left more room to create small groupings and centres. She added cardboard and wooden dividers to provide three semi-private alcoves. The one designated as "Language Arts" had a listening post, a display of books and two free tables for writing activities. "Unfortunately, I need to keep several tables free for the ten children who come back in the afternoon." (82.10.12) The remaining eighteen children were assigned to clusters of four desks according to compatibility and ability.

Now that Joy was finally able to arrange her room to accommodate more active learning and a centre approach, she was again stalled. This time by lack of materials.

> Over the Thanksgiving weekend I spent all day Sunday getting the room organized. I really felt I'd accomplished something. Then, Monday when I tried planning how I'd use the areas it was more difficult. You need so many materials to set up centres. I have games and things that are relevant but geared for younger children. I just don't have enough time right now to revise them. (82.10.12)

Being so close to her goal of having some centres, she pondered over the best way to actually get them operational.

> I don't know, maybe I should put them (materials geared to younger children) out anyway if it would give me more time to work with others. I could split the class and have half of them working in centres and I could work with the others. (82.10.12)

Upon inquiring whether there was any budget for purchasing materials she replied,

> Yes. Ray said I could spend a reasonable amount. I need to find out what a reasonable amount is. Everything is so expensive and one thing isn't enough for a centre. I have a terrific problem spending money. I've never had much to spend so I've always made things cause it just took time and is so much cheaper. I'd prefer to buy practical, basic things like dice and plain cards to make into task cards, but it all takes so much time. If I just had the Christmas holidays right now I could make up so many things. Well maybe I'll just have to set up two centres and start with that. (82.10.12)

If centres are to provide meaningful learning experiences for children they must be carefully planned and implemented, and do require specially prepared materials that are appropriate for independent involvement. It is not surprising that Joy was experiencing considerable concern and, under the circumstances, her decision to start with two centres indicated a realistic approach.

Initially, Joy developed her Language Arts Centre which began with three component areas; one dealing with letter writing, a second for creating greeting cards for special occasions or illness and a third for writing and illustrating stories. With her smaller morning group she was moving towards her goal for small group active learning activities that were geared to individual abilities and interests.

While she worked with small groups of children the others moved back and forth freely between their desks and the centres. Joy seemed more relaxed in the mornings, smiled more and her enthusiasm for language arts seemed to engulf the whole classroom.[11] Some of this change might be attributed to the smaller numbers, some to her greater contentment that she was getting closer to her goal of activity based learning and some that language arts was her real area of strength.

Over the fall there had been several changes in focus. Prior to school starting Joy wanted an activity-centered space that would invite children to become involved. Although her lack of familiarity with the curriculum combined with limited time to prepare for school opening thwarted the possibility of this becoming a reality, she attempted to create a landscape that was pleasant to be in. Early on she experienced a need for order and control so for several weeks she struggled to find the most appropriate ways to arrange the physical space so it would both contain the students and yet enable them to be involved in concrete, experiential activities. By the middle of October she was getting closer to her activity approach, but only in the mornings. With her large afternoon group she was still feeling considerable frustration about meeting the needs and interests of individual children.

> Ronnie's so interested in science. If I could just get a centre set up he could take off on his own.

> When this new girl came into class it made me realize how far behind we were in math. The aide is working with the real slow ones and we're using the math workbooks now. (Which arrived mid-October.) (82.10.22)

In a study on "difficulty", Val Oldham found that frustration was often linked to difficulty, and participants frequently referred to "their sense of frustration at being unable to accomplish what they had intended." (1982, p. 100) In identifying three levels of frustration, she described the first level as challenging the person to try harder because there is the possibility of attainment. At the second level the person begins to lose hope of reaching their goals, while by the third level the person has given up ever achieving their intended goal.

---

[11] The children seemed more settled and there was more "quiet chatter related to tasks at hand" than there had been earlier in the year.

Joy was beginning to "lose hope" with her afternoon group. The needs and interests of these twenty-nine students were so great that it seemed almost impossible to meet them. When she felt her class was behind in math, she compromised her ideal to teach math through concrete materials and relied more on workbooks.

Near the end of October I asked Joy how she was feeling about the split and she replied,

> It's better. I wouldn't want to go back to full days with all the kids. At least I feel we get something done in the morning. In the afternoons it's almost worse. There are no desks for the other kids, their equipment gets lost, they see sitting at the tables as a game. The worst thing is the emotional strain on me. The afternoon brings together a lot of kids that bounce off each other. In a small group they're fine but in a large group there are so many more temptations. The atmosphere is loud, busy and crowded. Lately we've had a lot of problems with stealing books, balloons, stamps - supplies we use for fun things in the morning . . . actually caught some taking them from my desk . . . maybe they're feeling cheated when they get back here in the afternoons. Stan's the only one who's voiced that but it seems to come across non-verbally . . . (82.10.22)

So although the split was providing more individual attention for all the children in the morning, it wasn't a totally successful arrangement.

Each week new features appeared in Joy's room. Every three or four weeks a new theme display was put up with related words for story writing. Displays of children's poems, stories, and art works were regularily changed. Centre activities related to ongoing themes were featured from time to time.

Monday, November 29 heralded another major change in Joy's room. A full-time teacher had been hired for the split two-three class. Now Joy just had her "regular kids" all day. Her greeting for the class that morning was;

> As you can see there are some changes in the classroom. Now its going to be just you and me. The other grade two's won't be coming in during the afternoons. I'm going to be changing things gradually so please be patient. When I get all finished its going to be a lot of fun for you too. (82.11.29)

Although she had hoped for this day from early September, there was little sense of elation once it finally arrived. It was as though her hopes had been shattered so many times over the fall that she didn't dare let herself become excited any more.

However, with fewer students to plan for and a more stable situation than she'd had all fall, Joy now felt she could really move into centres. She commented on some of the advantages of working this way.

> I don't like the curriculum. It's too restrictive for this group anyway. That's one of the reasons I want to get the centres going - so I can provide more variation and they can do it on their own . . . they should be able to find something to do at their own level and feel good about succeeding at it. It will allow me to pick up on individual children who are having trouble . . . I work more effectively with small groups while the others are involved in worthwhile activities. It will provide more challenge for the advanced students - they don't need the high structure that workbooks provide.

As Joy came to know the varying needs of her students she felt that the approved curriculum materials and guidebooks often thwarted, rather than facilitated, her efforts to meet their needs. Even though preparing centres was time consuming, she saw them as a means of providing her with more in-class time for individual students. She pondered on some of the concerns related to centres,

> I don't want to implement centres and then have disorder. It should be both fun and a good learning experience so I want to insure they don't just fool around. It's really important that the centres are carefully implemented. (82.11.29)

Throughout the fall a few children at a time had been involved in centre activities. However, this was the first time the whole class would be working in centres at one time. Joy carefully explained what would be happening in each of the new centres and procedures to follow. After setting the class to work she took groups of three or four around to each centre going over the task cards, explaining what to do and answering questions.

Ton Beekman (1982) speaks of the need for a classroom to be "child friendly." The physical arrangement of the room can contribute to this, but even more important is the "feeling" or atmosphere within the room. In this respect Joy's focus changed over the year. Initially she focused more on the physical attributes but gradually she saw them as secondary to what actually happened within the room. In February Joy reflected

> I've always been in the space where environment was really important - like at the beginning of the year I felt environment really promoted certain things to happen, and I still do, but if I don't get stuff up before Monday, I'm not going to let it detract from what I'd hope to do if the stuff were up.
>
> I've found I can't do everything I want to. It's *impossible*. I could spend eighteen hours a day and I'd still never have a lot of things I wanted to do done . . . there are levels of importance and let's get down to what's *really* important and get that done if nothing else . . . where I am now is to focus on the positive things I can do to promote the children's self-concept. Their motivation, their willingness to learn . . . (83.02.24)

At the end of March, Joy seemed to be fairly content with her environment, even though there were things she'd still like to work on.

> . . . The centres are not as complete as I would like to have them, but I think I could live with my room the way it is now till the end of the year if I had to. (83.03.31)

What happens within the classroom for the children and teacher is really the essential element in education. There was an interesting transformation over the year. In the fall, both Joy and the children faced a new situation. For the children there was a new teacher, a new approach, new materials and for about half of them a new school. In addition to adjusting to these, Joy was also responsible for administrative details, fitting into an existing school structure, getting to know twenty-nine children's abilities and planning suitable learning for them. In thinking back over her initial adjustment to school life Joy commented,

> People deal with stress in different ways but I feel I was more rigid and tense with the class in the beginning. I tried to be really prepared for each day. . . . I maintained a pretty formal situation until I got to know the class and children. (83.05.16)

Each new situation and each new encounter with children, staff or parents had to be considered in terms of what's the most appropriate action now, what's the most efficient way to get this done, what's the school policy for this? As the year progressed Joy found

> . . . it took less energy to deal with all these things. Many of them became almost automatic so I had a lot more time to think about what I was doing with the children. (83.05.16)

As well as feeling more comfortable with the classroom situation, Joy was gaining a more thorough grasp of the objectives of the grade two curriculum. Knowing the goals she was to accomplish freed her from her earlier reliance on workbooks and manuals, and saw her drawing more from the children's experiences and interests when she planned learning activities.

> As long as I knew the kids were getting something worthwhile out of an experience I didn't worry too much about the noise level. Like the morning Ray came in when they were making puppets and theatres for their puppet plays. Some of the theatres were very elaborate with curtains. . . they were learning a lot about language. . . . So even though they were making a lot of noise I knew a lot of good things were happening too. (82.10.12)

In an article on teacher authority, Pagano (1982) notes that "authority is located outside the teacher, in teacher's manuals written by experts and in what the research demonstrates." (15) Initially, Joy felt some need to rely on commercially prepared materials to see her through the early weeks while she got to know curriculum expectations and the children. However, right from the beginning, Joy chose to use a psycholinguistic approach to reading that differed considerably from the approved reading series. So although Pagano's statement seems to indicate that beginning teachers would be powerless to create their own landscape, this did not happen in Joy's case.

Even though Joy frequently mentioned her need to become thoroughly familiar with the goals and objectives of the Provincial Curriculum for grade two, she did not see it as restricting what she did, but rather freeing her to plan a variety of activities that were closely matched to the needs and abilities of her particular class, while moving them towards the goals.

Suransky (1982) sees many schools as often representing dehumanizing institutions where children are forced into situations where they have to make sense of the existing landscape rather than being actively involved in creating their own reality; conquering their world. During the early months of school Joy did create the landscape and expected the children to conform. However, as she herself became more established and comfortable with the situation, she encouraged the children to play a larger role in what happened for them. Stories that the children had written and illustrated became the reading materials, their own stories were taped and became part of the listening centre. The children were beginning to see that their ideas were important and respected. That they were beginning to sense they could "conquer the world" can be illustrated by a child's comment. "Let's send Mel's book to the publisher and get it published so we can all have a copy." (83.03.15)

Experiencing Support

Several studies have highlighted the importance of support to the first-year teacher [Applegate (1977), Felder (1979), Tisher (1979)]. In chapter four this area will be examined at greater length in relation to the other two teachers in the study.

Although there were a number of formal induction activities set up by the Edmonton Public School Board, those were not the things that immediately came to Joy's mind when in February I asked her what things she had found most supportive - what people, things, events? She replied,

> I think there are different kinds of support systems. I think personally it was having time when I could prepare materials and things - in that sense I guess my husband was supportive. If I hadn't felt I could spend time at school without having to feel guilty about him being home by himself or taking time away from our relationship, I would have felt awkward. So I guess that's a personal support system.
>
> Professionally, I think support came from my previous experience. . . like the nursery school and at other child-related jobs - like summer camps, day camps. . . I had materials and resources at my finger tips so I didn't have to spend hours browsing at the library. It was almost like a preparation for teaching. (83.02.24)

When I asked her what she felt had made these experiences so much more helpful than student teaching, she didn't really know, but thought perhaps it was a more "real" experience.

> Student teaching was good, but I thought it was (pause) almost a false situation where you wrote up a lot of things that were good to know but not that realistic, whereas in jobs I've worked in, it's been a reality. Those things had to be done because there were reasons for it - proposals for a camp - everything was at stake - not because the cooperating teacher or faculty consultant was going to check it and say "yes you can teach this." In student teaching the cooperating teacher was still responsible for what you did. (83.02.24)

There were a number of ways Joy felt her previous experiences had been more supportive than student teaching. "In summer jobs you can see it through from start to finish." This not only requires a person to plan and implement, but allows them to experience the satisfaction of seeing something through to the end. In student teaching there's never that total responsibility, nor can there be the total satisfaction that you did it all by yourself from start to finish.

Joy also felt she'd experienced a lot of administrative things

> . . . from working at the Friendship Centre, organizing day camps, et cetera. I had lots of experience collecting fees, checking lists, being accountable for what happened during the day, organizing volunteers. . . . (83.02.24)

Although these are very much part of a classroom teacher's responsibility, a student teacher rarely is expected to take over all of these tasks. Perhaps the experienced teacher sees these as so routine and mundane that they aren't considered important teaching skills to involve student teachers in. Even though many first-year teacher studies indicate these non-teaching tasks are bothersome to new teachers, Joy took them in her stride [Hawke (1980), Evans (1976), Ryan (1970)].

Joy felt her "strength in working with parents now came from working in lots of different jobs with children." As a nursery school teacher, she had daily contact with parents, and developed an ease in communicating with them about their children that seemed to carry over to her present position.

Within Notikewin School, Joy found a number of things supportive.

> Ray in particular. He was great. I'll treasure my first year in that I had such a cooperating principal. He took over my class at times and often took my outdoor supervisions the first two weeks. Things like that were really helpful. (83.02.24)

During Joy's initial interview with the principal he had indicated that "he would be supportive in whatever way he could", and Joy felt he had not let her down. Perhaps far more important than the actual times he relieved Joy of her class, was the knowledge that the principal was genuinely supportive of her in her efforts to get launched in her chosen career. He was a person she could count on if she needed him whether it was to "get away from the class" for a few minutes, or discuss one of the children in her class.

Ray had assured Joy that the staff was cooperative and friendly, and she found they were good to work with.

> The staff have all been helpful. We share ideas- we work together. . . . I've always felt very comfortable, very accepted, one of the staff right from the very moment I was introduced as the new grade two teacher, although sometimes I don't really feel as secure as I look or act. (83.02.24)

Whenever anyone enters the life space of an established group, she is a stranger, unfamiliar with the existing group's identity and possibly bringing foreign qualities to the situation. No matter how secure Joy may have appeared to the existing staff, she had to adapt to a new situation. Nash (1963) speaks of the "adaptable stranger" as one who can readily organize his experience more and more in terms of the realities of the new situation.(p. 471) Although Joy claims to have felt quite comfortable with the staff right from the beginning, her first few months were so taken up with her own classroom that she didn't really have time to become involved in many staff activities. It was after Christmas that she finally found time to participate in aerobics sessions and join the staff for luncheon excursions.

Another feature of the school Joy appreciated was having "access to the school whenever I wanted. That was good, otherwise I'd never have felt prepared." (83.02.24) This gave her the opportunity of staying at school where all her materials and books were, as well as allowing her to arrange and rearrange her classroom as she wished.

Earlier in the year, the principal had mentioned assigning Joy a "buddy". When I asked Joy if that had been helpful she commented that

> It hasn't been any sort of structured thing - we've just never really got together. She's teaching something new (library and resource) so it's taking a lot of her time. Neither of us have much time during the day. She's lent me materials and showed me where to get it - she did a lot of that in the fall. She'd ask me how it was going at the beginning of the year, but nothing structured. Like she didn't go with me to functions or say, "That looks like a really good inservice. Let's go together." Maybe I'd have gone to more if that had happened. (83.02.24)

In a review of literature on beginning teachers, Castle (1980) claims that

> One type of program for the first year teacher which has met with much success is the "buddy" system of assigning a first-year teacher to an experienced teacher who will facilitate the first-year teacher's adjustment to the school. In this type of program, the experienced teacher serves as a resource person, role model and counsellor to the first-year teacher. (p. 19)

Although Joy saw a "buddy" as potentially useful, she did not feel she had gained too much from the present arrangement. When asked if there had been anyone in particular who had been a "buddy" to her she felt that

> Barbara (a grade one teacher) has played a pretty important role as a friend - a professional friend. Being across the hall we get together pretty often and talk. She'd sometimes come in and ask for things and I've asked her for things. We've gone together to a few things. (83.02.24)

Perhaps this informal arrangement with Barbara provided more opportunity for two-way communication and sharing which Tisher (1979) found so important in his study of teacher induction in Australia. On this same topic Joy went on to say

> I don't think there's been anyone who's been emotionally close to me - my mentor. I don't know why, I probably could have used it. Maybe because I was always so busy I didn't have time to cry on anyone's shoulder - except my husband's. (83.02.24)

On another occasion she commented

> I would have liked to have another teacher in the same grade level as me. That might have helped. Now things are going better. The first term is over. I don't feel so desperate any more." (83.02.01)

During the first term, Joy sometimes expressed a feeling of not really knowing what reasonable expectations for grade two's were. Although her assigned "buddy" was an experienced grade two teacher and should have been able to provide some guidance as to suitable expectations, materials and activities, this did not seem to happen. This raises the question as to whether or nor it is workable or even desirable to *assign* people to work together?

The Edmonton Public School Board has two half-time consultants assigned to consider and plan for the needs of new teachers with the board. At a September 1 orientation session, the "New Teacher Consultants" provided general information about the system, advise on "as you start your first year", and answered questions. They outlined further sessions to be held during the year on management, individualization and effective teaching, and alerted the teachers to watch for information on "official welcome receptions" sponsored by the board and teachers association.

On October 29, the Board hosted a reception at an elegant downtown hotel. School board members and administrative staff officially welcomed teachers new to their system and then mingled informally over hot hors d'oeuvres and wine.

The next week, November 3, the Edmonton Public School Local of the Alberta Teachers Association held a *Welcome Night for New Teachers* at Barnett House. For this occasion the principal or an alternate was encouraged to bring the new teacher. During the first part of the program various ATA officials brought greetings and shared how they could assist the new teacher. Later a social hour was held including wine, cheese and home-made goodies.

On the following day I asked Joy how she felt about the two "Welcome Evenings".

> Well, last night was a little more reasonable regarding the amount of money spent . . . I guess I resent the extra money that could be spent on children and materials because it's affected me so directly. Last night's was a political push as far as the union goes - but I guess that's to be expected. Part of the evening was quite informative - like group benefits and encouraging one to get involved.
>
> Last night was more of a social function cause your principal could introduce you around to people.You didn't have to stay with him, but if you were feeling uncomfortable you could always sidle up to him, so I met a lot of other principals and table officers. At the board do it was almost all new teachers with only a few consultants there. (82.11.04)

As a new person, a stranger to the system, it was reassuring to Joy to have an established member of the system accompany her to the ATA "Welcome Evening". Her principal provided an important link between her and her unknown host. Even though the Edmonton Public School Board "hosts" were very outgoing in approaching the new teachers there was not that personal link. For Joy it was a less satisfying experience.

When I asked Joy why she thought there had been so many more at the Board function versus the ATA function, she replied

> It was not such a posh affair. People are feeling they have to make choices

> about time - they're all busy with report cards going out, so some just weren't keen about taking two nights off. (82.11.04)

Within the Edmonton Public School Board, teachers are provided time for professional development. Sometimes these are school-based activities, sometimes system-wide and sometimes the teacher has a choice of what she will do with her time. Joy chose a full-day workshop with Bill Martin in January. She excitedly told me about it.

> It was really good. It reaffirmed in my mind things I really want to do in language arts but was beginning to wonder if it would really work - like not having workbooks every day. I haven't had that much practical experience and sometimes wonder if I'm making any progress. . .

This workshop really seemed to be just what Joy needed at that time. When I asked her about the value of workshops she'd attended she said, "As a new teacher there have been several that I've had to attend but this one was the first one that was really for me - my interest." (83.02.01) Being able to choose one that was directly related to her interest and present need was very important to Joy.

Later that month when she was thinking back over the new teacher inservices and other seminars she'd attended, she commented,

> I think they provided more refreshing breaks than support. I've valued the times I could get away, I think I did learn some things from the seminars.
>
> Like the management seminar (mid-October). It came at a good time for me. It was a critical time as far as management 'cause I was having trouble with my kids. It reminded me of things I knew and needed to brush up on. A lot of the things in the seminar one knows but it brings them to one's attention again. It helps one stand back and evaluate what you're doing and to take a breath and then to get back at it.
>
> I think everything I've gone to has been really worthwhile - both for the professional development and the break from the classroom and also from the kids. (83.02.24)

Although Joy was positive about seminars she'd attended, she felt some conflict in terms of time.

> Maybe the seminars are worthwhile in the long run, but I'm so tired after school I don't feel like going and if they schedule them during the day one has to do extra planning for the sub. I still don't find time to go to evening seminars. (83.02.24)

However, by April Joy did go to an evening seminar on classroom management. Earlier in the month she'd attended a professional development day where Barbara Colorossa had really excited her with a "compassionate, warm, structured and consistent approach to discipline and behavior management." (83.04.25)

After attending her first Teachers' Convention, Joy indicated she had "really enjoyed the convention and the displays. I think they provide a good resource because I don't always find the time to go around to all the stores and see what materials they have." (83.02.24)

In looking at the things Joy found most supportive there is a progression from those that enabled her to get her own thinking sorted out, to those that reaffirmed what she was doing, to those that introduced new ideas.

In the fall understanding and acceptance were important. First of all, understanding and acceptance by her husband of the long hours of planning and preparing. Also, understanding by the principal of her need for some short breaks from the actual teaching situation, and his acceptance of her desire to organize and teach her class in the way she believed in. Seminars at this time were seen as refreshing breaks and reminders of basic pedagogy.

As Joy developed her program, it became important to get some reassurance that what she was doing was viable. So by February or March support came from seminars where noted educators were reaffirming what she was doing. A further reassurance came when her principal nominated her as a candidate for the Edwin Parr Award.[19]

Once Joy was feeling more comfortable about her own program, she seemed ready and open for new ideas that might further enhance her teaching. Initially this may seem fairly consistent with Fuller's (1969) levels of concern that start with concern about self-adjustment and adequacy, move on to concern related to student learning and eventually to concern with improving one's own teaching. In Joy's situation she was concerned about each of these levels throughout the year, however, on the practical side she did devote more effort and time to certain elements of teaching early in the year than later on.

Time figured high in her assessment of support. Was an event worth the time taken away from planning? Did it save her time, as in convention displays or previous resources? Was it really worth the extra effort of planning for a substitute teacher?

Self-selection also seemed important. Her enthusiasm was always greater when she was able to select sessions that she deemed pertiment to her particular needs and interests at that tine.

---

[19] An award given in recognition of exceptionally fine teaching during the first year.

New Beginnings

A Smaller Class for Half Days

Before school started Joy had indicated her goal was to "get through to Thanksgiving and then reassess things." (82.08.03) This proved to be a significant date, indeed, for the much hoped for split of her large class came about on a half-day basis.

Up to Thanksgiving her weeks seemed almost nightmarishly full of *so many children, with so many different needs, with so many behavior problems, and so much material to become familiar with, so much to prepare, so much time spent creating a desirable environment, and so little time for anything but school.*

The first six weeks might be portrayed as taking a ride on a crowded, rather hectic, merry-go-round that would not stop. It just kept going around and around, with its ups and downs, and an occasional pause, but never providing time to stop, get off, and really reflect on what was happening, or to consider if there was another way to go. Joy was constantly struggling to understand the varied needs of her class. It had come as a real shock to have so many problems in one class. There were several children not reading, one non-English speaking, several repeaters, a number of behavior problems and a few who needed enrichment. In Joy's words, "The size and mixture of my class just blew my mind. There were so many behavior problems - it was a constant battle and that was discouraging. I never felt I was doing a very good job with any child." (82.10.12)

Not knowing what was going to happen to her class from day to day was also a constant strain. Should she just plan short one and two-day activities in case some of the children left in a few days, or could she safely plan more involved units with the assumption the children were all going to be with her for several weeks?

> It was hard to handle the uncertainty of what was going to happen to my class. Every time it looked like it was going to be split, it fell through. One week it was on, the next off. It was very discouraging. (82.10.12)

Her initial unfamiliarity with the curriculum and guide books was replaced by the frustration of not having time to prepare suitable materials that would enable the children to become actively engaged in their own learning.

> The Math guide has good ideas for games, but I just don't have time to make them up . . . I find there's too wide a gap between manipulative activities and the workbooks . . . My kids can understand at the concrete level, but can't move to workbooks. I could develop better materials but I'd have to spend a lot of time. (82.10.12)

When I inquired about using the instructional aide or parent volunteers she expressed some concern.

> I don't know how to utilize them to the best advantage. If I have to think up ideas, make up samples and spend time with them so they know what to do, I might as well make them (82.10.12)

Although these people were a possible source of help, Joy was unable to make good use of them. She was just beginning to get a feel for what was expected in grade two herself, and was not ready to translate these expectations into well specified activities that could be developed by someone else. Working with aides and volunteers requires another whole range of skills in addition to those necessary to work effectively with children. In those first few weeks Joy just couldn't take on that additional challenge.

The combination of trying to meet the varied needs of her class while feeling unfamiliar with the material seemed overwhelming at times.

> I could handle one or the other, but when I have to battle all day with behavior problems and then go home and spend long hours trying to get familiar with the curriculum and prepare lessons, it's just too much. Some days I wonder, "What am I doing this for?" (82.10.12)

Nevertheless, there were a few good experiences during those first few weeks.

> I think I feel best about the things the kids have done well. My success is their success. In language arts, they made up story boards and puppets. Then they shared them with other classes. They were thrilled, and they learned so much about language. (82.10.12)

Joy also felt the whole school had been supportive of her initial efforts.

> I was fortunate in getting so much support from the staff and Ray - especially the first three weeks. I never felt alone. All the staff helped in some way - helping me find materials, showing me how to run machines, et cetera. Ray was really good about relieving me - sometimes supervision outside and sometimes during classes. (82.10.12)

Although Joy claimed the staff had been most helpful, she seemed to experience some conflicting thoughts during those first few weeks. "How could they (the staff) put money ahead of the needs of the children in her room?" "Was it really fair of the principal to hold out for the teacher he wanted while she was struggling so hard and unsuccessfully to meet their diverse needs?"

Thanksgiving brought the merry-go-round to a momentary stop, and with ten of the twenty-nine children going to another class every morning for the language arts program, it "seemed like a new beginning." (82.09.12) By now Joy was also becoming more familiar with curriculum goals and materials, had a better understanding of individual children's needs and interests, and was generally feeling more comfortable with her grade two class. The long weekend gave her just a little more time than usual to reorganize her classroom and get a fresh start.

A Smaller Class for Full Days

When the temporary arrangement finally turned into a new full-time two/three classroom, Joy was left with eighteen students. Now she could *really* get on with creating the activity-based program she had wanted all fall.

> Now I can get my centres going and provide more variation for individual students. I find the curriculum too restrictive for this group anyway. With only eighteen children I can really individualize my program now. (82.11.25)

Although Joy was anxious to get her centres started this was also a source of concern.

> I don't want to implement centres and then have disorder. It should be both fun and a good learning experience. So it's important the centres are carefully implemented. (82.11.25)

Monday morning, November 29, she commented,

> . . . it's not changed as much as it should be. There's just not enough time. I need 48-hour days. Beginning teachers should be single and have nothing else to do. (82.11.29)

There always seemed to be so much to do and such limited time to devote to it. Added to this was the feeling she had neglected her spouse. How long could one reasonably expect a husband to tolerate such long hours devoted to school work?

Now that she saw the possibility of her ideal class beginning to take shape, she seemed even more frustrated by the lack of time to devote to preparing it.

> I never seem to have enough time. If I work on the centres then I don't get the marking done. If I do the marking, then I don't have time to work on the centres. I've got lots of activities to put in, but need to get the centres set up, the instructions printed up, the evaluation worked out, record keeping established, et cetera. (82.11.29)

Although this was like "starting all over again" Joy just didn't seem to have the energy she'd had in September to throw herself into "beginning again" and then, there was

Christmas. . .

> I'm not as on top of things as I should be. It's Christmas and I should have lots of things set up. I feel like I've started all over again - now I have fewer kids but I'm still not on top of things. I'm a little discouraged. Christmas only comes once a year so you can't say you'll do it later. The other teachers keep telling me I should spend some time at home with my husband. Kirby (a fellow teacher) chides me and says "You can't expect to be the teacher now that you will be five years from now." but I guess I want to be a first year super teacher - but I guess you can't. (82.12.01)

Things seemed to reach a real low just before Christmas. Joy was tired, felt she was letting the children down, didn't feel she had been the "super teacher" she had planned on being and was feeling some guilt over lack of time to spend with her husband.

A New Year: January, 1983

People often think of January as a new beginning; a time for new resolutions. For people in education, Christmas and New Year's also bring a holiday period of one to two weeks.

Just before Christmas, Joy had seen the holiday as a time for personal renewal, and an opportunity to get reacquainted with her husband.

> Since the long week-end in September we've hardly seen each other. We just pass each other as one goes out and the other comes in. It will be good for us to have some time together. He's tired, (Ralph is a U of A student and had been studying for final exams and doing papers) I'm tired, and we need some time to spend together. (82.12.01)

However, there was the possibility that Ralph would be working during the holidays. "If that's the case, perhaps I'll just come to the school and work and get lots of things done and my centres all set up." (82.11.29)

How did Joy spend the holidays?

> I came in a few days . . . I didn't do any marathon days. I'd come in for three or four hours in the afternoons. I came in several times - perhaps five, but I sort of worked leisurely. I didn't accomplish as much as I wanted to and wasn't as organized as I thought I'd be coming into January . . . I'm not happy with my centre material. I haven't gotten as far as I'd like and I guess that's why it's kind of discouraging. It seems like there's so much to do to get it ready for the kids. . . and with being sick[20] last week and all the other circumstances I just haven't got them going. (83.01.18)

Even though Joy was unhappy about the situation, she seemed to have accepted it.

> I'm feeling a little more positive about January because it's like a new beginning. So if it takes two or three more weeks to get it ready - well there's other new things about January, like coming back to school.

---

[20] Joy was away for four days due to a miscarriage.

(83.01.18)

How did Joy feel about being back at school?

> I was glad to be back in some ways and in some ways I hadn't felt all that positive about December - late November and December, so I wasn't - maybe there was a little bit of carry over - a little bit of negative. In some ways it was a new beginning but in some ways I had this shadow hanging over me. What happens if I can't get things under - can't get things as organized as I'd really like to be - that's probably why part of me didn't feel good about coming back cause I had this idea of what it was going to be like when I came back in January and I didn't accomplish all those things over Christmas. So in some ways I was glad to come back sort of a new start and a new beginning - but I didn't accomplish all those things to get a new beginning going. Does that make sense? (83.01:18)

Part of being back seemed to include an assessment of what had the students gotten out of the fall term?

> . . . I really wondered have they learned anything, have I been teaching anything? In December I felt like the whole fall had slipped away and I hadn't accomplished very much." (83.01.18)

Joy was now beginning to see education as more of a cooperative venture between the home and school:

> I'm starting to put a little more emphasis on what's happening at home . . . I really have the feeling parents want to help but don't know how . . . In February I'm hoping to do a couple of seminars for parents to help them in working with their kids. (83.01.18)

January also found her assessing her role as a teacher.

> Sometimes I feel I've never been in a classroom before, yet to read my resume you'd think I was a pro, and yet sometimes I feel at such a loss. Sometimes I really wonder if I'm in the right space . . .

As Joy had come to this position with three years' experience working with young children, she expected to have things running smoothly and felt some dissatisfaction that they were not.

> What I'm really wondering about is what parents think about reading?[21] As far as a reading program here almost anyone would come in and say I don't have a reading program. You have to know my philosophy of reading.

Along with some doubts about her accomplishments, Joy seemed to have come to a realization that she might have to accept less than her ideal. "I've used workbooks a little more heavily from December on and I'm not really all that happy with that but it's more of a stop-gap measure." "I guess I'll just have to go with centres one day a week and go from there." (83.01.18) Joy also seemed ambivalent about her overall accomplishments.

---

[21] Joy has been using a psycholinguistic approach to reading which is based on three concepts; first, reading is not primarily visual but rather based on an understanding of language patterns experienced in every day life; secondly, reading is a cyclical activity involving sampling the information, predicting, testing out prediction and confirming results; and thirdly, the reader is an active participant in the reading process, so what is to be read must be meaningful and stimulating to the young child. This approach is developed through using good literature and producing their own materials rather than using a standard reading series.

> Some days I wonder if I'm trying to do too much, and then I look at the last four months and wonder what did we do? and think now it's time to really make tracks. I don't know, sometimes I feel like we've done some good things and sometimes I feel that we've got a long way to go and it doesn't seem long til June now. (83.01.18)

Really Taking Off

As February progressed, things seemed to be on a real upswing for Joy. At last she really felt on top of it all. Good things were beginning to happen for the children.

> Some of the kids are really bursting into reading now some of the really slower kids - and that's exciting to be in on. The whole book-making thing has been pretty exciting. The kids are really into it now. They'll go to the writing centre and create a book of their own. Like Jack's . . . read it to the class and they burst into spontaneous applause - the kids loved it - it was really a good story and somebody said "Why don't we take this to a real book place and get it published so we can all have a copy of it . . . and Mel has just done a book and gotten someone else to illustrate it for him. So on the cover it's *written by Mel, illustrated by Cindy* and the dedication page is *To my teacher*. That was really special. (83.03.31)

Now she was familiar with the goals and objectives of the grade two curriculum, and felt comfortable with their progress. However, it wasn't until the Easter break at the end of March, that she found time to translate her long-range plans into a written format that showed which topics were to be covered. "I should have done this at the beginning of the year, but just never found I had time." (83.03.29)

Although she "still didn't have enough time for all she wanted to do," she'd learned to live with it. Now that she knew the children and the grade two expectations, she wasn't so upset if she didn't get everything thoroughly planned, or have the room exactly as she hoped. Both she and the children were more relaxed. They knew and liked each other, and together they had created a landscape they felt comfortable in.

> The kids like the classroom a lot better now, and so do I. Most of them can work on their own in the centres. There seems to be a general state of happiness now. Out of the blue, one of them will come over and give me a hug and then go back to work.

Now Joy could take genuine pleasure in what the children had learned, without being overly concerned about whether or not they were as far along as other classes. In the fall, a child had transferred into Joy's class who was much further on in the Mathematics Workbook. Although concerned, Joy found many in her class just could not move any faster. In May she comented on how quickly they were moving along now.

> It seemed to work well to focus on the basics in the fall. At the time I was really worried we'd never finish, but now they're just doing great, and they can use what they've learned. (83.05.16)

Joy was now able to consider events beyond her own classroom. She spoke enthusiastically about "her"[22] professional development day.

> This was the first one that was really for me - my interest. It was an all day workshop with Bill Martin. It re-affirmed in my mind all the things I really want to do in language arts but was really beginning to wonder if it really works. (83.02.24)

Coming early in February, this workshop gave Joy a much needed boost. In January she had been wondering if she was really getting through to the kids. Were they actually making progress? She knew some were, but what about the others? When Joy voiced her concern, Bill Martin replied:

> If you've been providing good language patterns you'll find that suddenly there may be a breakthrough. With some children there might not be a breakthrough with any program. (83.01.26)

February did bring a breakthrough for many of the children. I find my field notes filled with poems and stories written by the children.

Snowflakes

Snowflakes are freezing

frosty, feathery, soft, chilly, glittery.

I like snowflakes because they make me feel cold.

Coldflakes

Coldflakes are cold, beautiful, smooth, blue,

wet, crispy and chilly.

I like coldflakes because they make

me feel like big snowballs all the time.

---

[22] At Notikewin each teacher was sponsored to attend two or three professional development sessions of their own choice. Joy distinguished between the ones she had to attend as a new teacher and "hers" which she could choose.

Joy was now experiencing more personal satisfaction from her teaching. Perhaps she wasn't quite that super teacher she had dreamt of being, but things were going well.

Throughout her struggles and achievements, a watchful eye had been on Joy. In March, her principal nominated her as a candidate for the Edwin Parr Award for Excellence in Beginning Teaching.

What About Next Year

One day at lunch the kindergarten teacher returned from a doctor's appointment to announce she was pregnant and wouldn't be teaching next year. After a round of congratulations, Kirby turned to Joy and said "There. You can take over the kindergarten class." Joy replied,

> The way I'm feeling right now, I'm not sure I'd want to change. I'm just getting things organized for grade two . . . Next fall it should be smoother running and I'd have a little more time for a personal life. I'd like kindergarten and I have a lot of materials and know how I'd get it organized - but everything would be new all year again." (82.12.01)

By January, it looked as though Joy wouldn't be teaching at all next year. Her husband had applied to the Theological Seminary near the University of British Columbia for a three year program in theology.

> We sort of thought with that transition it was a good time for us to think about another kind of transition (to start a family) since I won't likely be able to get a job out there. So as it is right now I won't be teaching in the fall. I must admit I'm rather looking forward to it - to the break. (83.01.18)

With the frustrations outweighing the satisfactions up to Christmas, the thought of being free from all those demands must have been inviting to Joy. Although the prospect of beginning her own family was a most satisfying alternative she didn't want to completely abandon her professional career.

> Actually I'm toying with the idea of writing - writing home curriculum for parents to use with their children . . . materials that could be used with children like I've had in this classroom - those who've just missed out on the basics somehow. (83.01.18)

With her miscarriage and the very slight possibility of getting a teaching position in Vancouver, Joy began to consider curriculum writing more seriously.

> I don't want to lose touch with my profession and yet I don't think I'd want to sub in Vancouver. I'm actually writing curriculum now for a children's study on India for a Canadian mission group. Since I've been a little involved in that I thought it was something I could do. It gives me something to look forward to for next year anyway. (83.01.18)

As one struggles with a new task or assignment, one inevitably thinks "next time I'll do it this way, or that, or start this earlier, or I've just about got it." Knowing she would not likely be teaching grade two next year must have been somewhat frustrating in that she wouldn't have an immediate opportunity to refine her teaching strategies. Then there was all the preparation of special activities and centres that might never be used again.

In January as Joy showed me some new centres she'd just developed, she seemed almost to be thinking out loud.

> Since I don't expect to be here next year, I sometimes wonder if it's good use of my time to develop all these centres. It seems so temporary. On the other hand I don't think I could live with myself if I didn't feel I was providing all I possibly could for these kids." (83.01.18)

Joy's commitment to doing what was best for the children was very strong, and during the following months both teacher and students blossomed. Joy felt she was finally on top of the curriculum, planning and control so she was now able to focus more on the children. The children were getting "caught up in the excitement of learning," writing and illustrating their own books, relating science and math to their everyday lives, experiencing success in reading.

As the year-end neared, Joy's plans for the immediate future were still uncertain, but she was definitely planning to stay in education. In May she started a list of "Things To Do Next Year" (whenever that next year occurred). It included suggestions of ideas or activities that had worked well this year and she wanted to use again, like the children developing their own books and using them for reading; ideas that worked well but she'd start earlier another year, like each child developing his own private dictionary/word book; as well as suggestions of things that she thought would work well but hadn't gotten around to trying this year, such as a binder for each child to keep worksheets in.

In reflecting on what had worked well, Joy was pleased that she'd been able to implement as many things as she had, even if several got started late in the year. She felt confident that another year she'd have things running smoothly much earlier on.

> The only way you can really get a sense of all the things that have to be done, is to actually teach that first year. You can't get it at University. (83.05.16)

Even though Joy felt well prepared for her first year, she still found there was much that was new and strange to her. While a University program can prepare a teacher for many aspects of teaching, there are some aspects that can only be experienced by "actually teaching that first year."

C. CAROLINE

Becoming a Teacher

A Life-long Dream

Caroline's introduction to "the other side" of school came early as her mother was a teacher. One of her "first" experiences with actual teaching occurred in grade seven. As a junior high student, Caroline had an extra half hour at noon, so she started going into her mom's grade two room and working with small groups of children who needed some extra help. Caroline remembers how helping one little girl who needed a lot of attention, gave her a great feeling. "I really liked it and all through Junior High I helped out in the elementary school." (82.09.30)

The knowledge that she could help someone feel safe, secure and good about themselves provided strong motivation for Caroline. She unofficially became a part-time aide at her mom's school, and helped out in many different elementary classrooms throughout her junior high years. She found she could relate well to children, and she especially enjoyed working with the younger ones. In thinking back over those days, Caroline commented, "A lot of my friends dreamt about clothes and parties, but I used to dream of becoming a teacher." (82.11.05)

As Caroline grew up, she and her mom often discussed educational issues, so she had lots of opportunities to test out her ideas on a range of topics, from educational philosophy to school politics.

Caroline was exposed to teachers, in and out of school, and from early on and saw them all as individuals although some had more effect on her than others.

> I really liked all my elementary teachers and there was one in Junior High, and one in High School, that really impressed me. They really made a difference in how I felt about their subjects. One was an English teacher and I've always been good at that. The other was in Home Ec., and I really like to cook. I think you really learn when a teacher makes you feel worthwhile and capable. (83.02.16)

It was the positive experiences in Caroline's early education that had left an impression on her, and she hoped to emulate those caring teachers that really turn kids on to learning.

Perhaps Caroline's own mom, and her friends/colleagues provided the most significant models for Caroline. She often speaks of the tremendous respect she has always had for her mom, as she moved from classroom teacher, to consultant, to vice-principal. When I enquired whether her mother's successes influenced her strong desire to be a super teacher, she replied,

> Well, there is an element of carrying the torch, you know, like from Mom, cause she really is so outstanding, and she's got so many really good ideas. I respect her to the end of the world and back as a teacher, and as a person in general. (82.11.05)

There was also the sense of not wanting to let her Mom or her Mom's colleagues down.

> I remember taking a course from Melinda Oaks (at University). She and Mom had been consultants together and it worried me. I had to be really good. Melinda never put any of those things on me, but I put them on myself because of Mom. I guess I'm a people pleaser - but it's more than that with teaching. (82.11.05)

With her mom a successful and respected educator in the same education system Caroline had obtained a job with, Caroline not only had an interested patron, but a standard of performance to live up to. She wasn't little Miss Nobody from the country, she was Ruth's daughter, so she had to be good.

Experiencing University

Upon completing high school, Caroline entered the University of Alberta in the Faculty of Education as a language arts specialist. Her interest in working with young children soon led her to switch into the early childhood education route. Caroline found her first two years in the education program frustrating. "I wanted to be a teacher, and I wanted education courses and practical experiences with children. I could not see the relevance of political science or sociology of aging, to teaching young children." (83.01.30)

This frustration led her to leave the B.Ed. program to work as a teacher aide in a kindergarten program for a year. Many education students are disappointed about the lack of contact with children in their first year or two of the B.Ed. program, but few actually interrupt their program to seek out practical experience as Caroline did.

Throughout her University program, Caroline typically became excited about those experiences that really interested her and seemed relevant, and merely tolerated those aspects of the program that didn't interest her. So after two years of not really getting what she thought was relevant to working with young children, it is not surprising that she turned her back on a formal program and sought experience elsewhere.

When Caroline returned to University for her third year, she felt this first-hand experience had made a tremendous difference in what she was able to get out of the B.Ed. program. "I got a lot more out of courses after my experience as an aide. I had a sense of what I needed to know. If you have not had any experience with small children it's hard to relate activities to them. It all makes more sense if you understand children." (82.11.08)

Even though many teacher-educators would wholeheartedly support Caroline's statement, this early and extended experience with children is often missing in education programs. Caroline had found her own remedy to this missing element. Her experience also contributed a lot to her own confidence in working with children.

> Ben (the kindergarten teacher) gave me a lot of really positive feedback. He demonstrated that it was all right to laugh and joke with the children. He always was 100% concerned with the rights of the children. He introduced me to Raffi and how much fun it was to sing with children. Ben was very encouraging and positive." (82.11.08)

Ben had introduced her to a new way of interacting with children, one that was less formal than she had experienced in elementary school. Life in his kindergarten class was fun; the children were excited about learning. They were treated as persons.

After this very positive year, Caroline was enthusiastic to get on with becoming the teacher she wanted to be. Again she felt inundated with Arts Courses. "There were so many education courses I wanted to take and could not fit in. As a kindergarten teacher you need a C & I in every subject and you can never take enough language arts. But, I ended up having to take things like American Literature." (82.11.08)

Although she was not totally enthusiastic about all education courses, she saw them as more relevant "at least you're thinking education and doing education things, even if you're not with young children." (83.01.30) Her strong desire to actually be doing things with children won out once more, and she again interrupted her program, this time to work in a subsidized Day Care Centre. Although she enjoyed the young children, she was horrified at the regimentation imposed upon three, four and five year olds from early morning until late afternoon. "It got to the point I was telling prospective moms they should find some other place for their children." (82.08.30)

Having experienced two quite different settings for young children, Caroline was beginning to get some definite ideas about what she thought should be happening for young children. Now she wanted to complete her B.Ed. so she could get into the field and make some changes. She returned to University for the spring term and did her first round of student teaching in a kindergarten under

> a very experienced language arts oriented teacher. She had everything working like clockwork, and I had a lot of very rich experiences. This was my first real teaching experience and she (the cooperating teacher) gave me a lot of feedback that really made me examine things I was doing. She made me feel like I was a good teacher and would be an asset to the teaching profession." (82.11.08)

This was a different experience from working as an aide or a day care worker. Now a professional teacher was pushing her to really examine what she was doing, and why. She was being encouraged to try out and refine her teaching strategies. She was receiving the message that she could be a good teacher. Soon, she too would join the ranks of professional teachers.

Caroline's Beliefs in Education

> Many of the things people get wrapped up in and excited about I just do not, but teaching is different. I come alive with teaching and I do not with a lot of things. I just feel strongly about things connected with it and I would like to make a difference in the lives of the children that I come in contact with. I would like to make a difference in the profession as a whole.

Caroline saw learning for young children as a continuous experience through which children moved at varying paces. Each child should be considered on his own merit and not be pushed too quickly, nor be made to feel incompetent because he'd not yet mastered some basic skill. She deplored some of the practises she'd seen in the field.

> I think we (educators in general) sometimes have a tendency to take a child who is doing very well and is very comfortable and successful, and we push them up, up, up, until we find somewhere that they're mediocre.... I think we should be more concerned about providing a wide range of experiences for them. (82.10.01)

She felt family grouping children from kindergarten through grade two or three would facilitate meeting individual children's needs.

> ... I would like to see some primary groupings - K to 3, so you could have

> more concrete things happening in these rooms, and the children progress at their own rate. If they need that extra year to progress it's sort of a natural thing. I do not like the graded system at all. (82.11.05)

Caroline felt the graded system was based on the expectation that all children were ready for the same thing at the same time. On the other hand, if a teacher had three or four different aged children in her class, she would expect and plan to provide a wide range of experiences and activities. The age mix and number of grade level curriculums to attend to did not deter Caroline,

> I don't see it as teaching kindergarten, grade one and grade two curriculum. I'm *teaching the children where they are* and fitting the components of the curriculum in when they're ready. (82.11.05)

Although Caroline's focus was on the child, not the curriculum, she realized she would still have to have a sound understanding of curriculum components at the different levels so she could introduce them at the appropriate time.

Caroline maintained that the most important objective of education should be to help each child develop a positive self concept. "They must feel good about themselves and have realistic expectations." (82.08.30) An exerpt from the school's "School Beliefs", also comments on the importance of a positive self concept:

> How a child sees himself and his world is a major determinant of his behaviour and a prime force in his approach to school. Next to home, the school is probably the single most important force in shaping a child's self concept. At Autumn Leaf we want each child to learn what he can do. Success in school will result in satisfaction, self confidence, pride in achievement and positive self feeling. We will do our best to prevent the experience of failure. Variations and allowances will be made for individual differences. Each child will be developing at his own pace.
>
> Learning is a cooperative venture rather than a competitive activity.

Caroline felt comfortable at a school whose philosophy so closely paralleled hers.

The child's need to communicate placed the whole language arts area at the top of her list of important skill areas to develop.

> I really believe in my heart that language arts is the most important area. I want children to develop a love for good books, to feel comfortable with books and good literature. They need to appreciate the value of print and see that you can record and preserve your thoughts and ideas. (82.08.30)

Caroline's strong background in the area of language arts, along with her love of literature and writing, resulted in this becoming the focus for her program.

Caroline believed that parents have a right to be involved in their children's education and she was prepared to share her understanding of children and learning with them.

> I think parents are often as new to kindergarten (and school) as the children, so I'll have to educate them about what they can expect and why certain things are being done. I hope I can make them feel interested in what's happening for their children. (82.08.30)

Even though she had heard that parents in this community weren't very interested in what happened at school, she believed that her genuine interest in sharing their children's development and learning would win them over. The following poem portrays Caroline's feelings towards the parent/teacher relationship.

TWO SCULPTORS

I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was a young child's mind,
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher; the tools she used
Were books, music and art.
One, a parent who worked with a guiding hand
And a gentle, loving heart.
Day after day the teacher toiled
With touch that was deft and sure,
While the parent labored by her side
And polished and smoothed it o'er.
And when at last their task was done,
They were proud of what they had wrought;
For the things they had molded into the child
Could neither be sold or bought,
And each agreed he would have failed
If he had worked alone,
For behind the teacher stood the school,
And behind the parent, the home.

Author unknown.

A Kindergarten of My Own!

Caroline had her heart set on being a kindergarten teacher. During University she focused her assignments on young children whenever possible, collected suitable pictures and activities and generally thought and talked early childhood all the time. She had considerable experience in kindergarten, and felt that was where she could make the greatest contribution.

Caroline had some definite ideas in mind as she looked for a position. She had her initial interview with Edmonton Public in February, and was offered a contract about a week later. Although no guarantee was given as to grade placement, Caroline's faith in getting a kindergarten class never wavered. She continued to focus her efforts on assignments related to kindergarten and had her long range plans written up by March/April.

In May she had several interviews with principals. She was offered a full time kindergarten position shared between two schools, but she opted for the half time position at Autumn Leaf. "I fell in love with Autumn Leaf, and decided half time was a good idea so I'd have my afternoons to prepare and my evenings to spend with my husband. I think it would be so difficult to work with two different kindergarten classes - especially in two different schools." (82.08.30)

Caroline also saw Autumn Leaf as a school that would be supportive, or at least amenable, to her philosophy of education.

> I went in with certain things I wanted to achieve this year. Ah - at least introduce and get some thought going. That's why I chose Autumn Leaf, because Betty (the principal) was very, very open. She said she'd support family grouping right through from K to 6. They did not have a reading series and they did not have rows of desks and they did not have all sorts of things that steal away from the kinds of things I am interested in and believe in. So I choose that school knowing it would be open to the kinds of thoughts I have. I guess I have to watch a little bit because in general I do not push as a person, and I have to be conscious of not pushing when it comes to education because it's something I feel so strongly about. (82.11.05)

Caroline wanted to have some impact on what was happening for young children. She immediately liked the principal at Autumn Leaf, and felt she would be supportive of the same ideology Caroline held. Caroline also believed female administrators were more oriented to the affective domain and often more concerned about individual children than their male counterparts.

Madeleine Grumet (1981) also sees a basic difference in male and female administrators. She develops the thesis that male educators tend to view education as a means "to claim the child, to teach him or her to master the language, the rules, the game and the names of the fathers." On the other hand female educators, if they follow their instinctual nature, are more inclined to "support the individuation of the child" meaning that "left to his own developmental agenda, the child will express his inner nature, realizing what she or he is." (p. 294) She goes on to say that in most educational settings "male administrators, and department chairmen dominate female teaching staffs" so education remains based on "paternal authority" structures. She sees open education and multi-age grouping as closely related to a feminist epistemology.

> Developmental theory also confirms the temporal order of feminine experience as it acknowledges the degree to which cognitive and emotional growth are contingent upon the biological maturation of the developing child. The hand that has rocked many cradles remembers well that one resists a child's developmental demands in vain and is attuned to those demands and the adaptations necessary to transcend them. We see these aspects of developmental theory extended into the multi-age,and non-graded classrooms of the infant schools and open classrooms. The open-school, open-class movement in many ways provides a setting for the curricular manifestations of feminine epistemology. (1981:295)

Caroline felt Autumn Leaf was already moving towards family grouping and a humanistic approach to children. This seemed to be a milieu in which she could thrive.

Getting Oriented

The Experience of Getting Ready for School

Throughout her B.Ed. program Caroline had been collecting pictures, games, resource materials and activities suitable for young children. Once she signed a contract with Edmonton Public, she began collecting resource books, writing up themes, tentative schedules, planning various centres and activities, organizing files and selecting books to accompany themes. By the end of May she knew she'd have the kindergarten class at Autumn Leaf, so she focused in on specific plans. During the summer she painted her whole classroom yellow with blue trim, made blue and white checkered curtains and arranged her room into activity areas.

Later in the year I queried her as to the most important thing as she started her new job. She replied

> The most important thing was the room. It started the first time I saw it. Environment is very important to me as a person. In my home I have soft colors to create a serene, pretty environment. That's important to me at home and where I work. I couldn't work in some environments. I student-taught in a room where there were rows of desks, no pictures, no children's work on walls. The program was teacher-centered, used workbooks exclusively and didn't get children involved in hands-on activities. It was dreary and I actually got an ulcer. (82.10.28)

It was important for Caroline to feel that her environment was an extension of her in mood and shade. When she had visited the kindergarten at Autumn Leaf in May, her initial reaction was, "I couldn't possibly work in this space." She found the orange walls and multicolored bulletin boards set her nerves on end, and she felt it would be impossible for her to work well under these conditions. When she offered to paint it herself over the summer, the principal consented. Caroline's commitment to creating a classroom in which she'd feel comfortable was characteristic of her involvement in things that interested her. "I guess I have tunnel vision. If I get really interested in something, I devote all my time and effort to it." (83.02.16) Once she got enthused/committed to something she would work tirelessly to bring about its fruition. She spent many days during the summer transforming the classroom into a warm, inviting place of learning.

Nine days before school commenced, I talked to Caroline about her expectations for the year. Most of her expectations were related to what she hoped would happen for the children. "First, a positive self-concept for each child, so they can feel good about themselves and have realistic expectations." Although this is important for all children, it was perhaps even more important for some of the children in Autumn Leaf, where many experienced broken homes, abuse, violence and neglect.

Although Caroline believed each child should be encouraged to develop all areas as fully as possible, her own interest in language arts made that a real priority.

> I want them all to develop a love for books. I want to expose them to really good children's literature so they feel comfortable with books and can discern between good and poor books. They should appreciate the value of print and see it as a way of preserving their thoughts and feelings. They should build a strong foundation of language skills. (82.08.30)

She felt it was important that children should learn through "play and active involvement - not worksheets. The parents and grade one teacher should know this." (82.08.30) Caroline did not feel you could leave this to chance. It was her responsibility as the kindergarten teacher to communicate what she believed was right to other teachers and the parents.

> I'll have to educate the parents about what they can expect and why certain things are being done. I'll stress that parents have a right to be involved in their kid's education. I'd like to have parent meetings, but I've been told by various people who work in Autumn Leaf that there is low parent involvement. If they don't come in, I'll go and visit them.... I really want them to know what's happening. If they know what they can do with the child at home, that will supplement what we're doing here." (82.08.30)

When I asked Caroline if she had any concerns about beginning her new job, her initial ones were related to aspects of the curriculum.

> I'm very concerned about the math program. I have not found one outlined for pre-school that shows how to build on previous skills .... I'm a little concerned about the science program. I'd like to integrate outdoor ed and science more than stress the natural sciences. I'm a bit concerned about the specific concepts that can be developed in water and sand play. (82.08.30)

Although these appeared to be genuine concerns, for she had been to the Education Library and withdrawn books and films on these topics, I felt that they may have been mentioned first because she associated me with curriculum and instruction courses. Caroline went on to voice concern over the fact that only four students had pre-registered for the kindergarten class and would/could they operate with so few. I sensed considerable concern over the possibility of its closure. It was one thing to choose to work only part time, but quite another to end up with no job or be transferred to another school at the last minute.

The uncertainty of numbers had also interfered with her plans to carry out home visits with all the children before school started, and to bring in small groups over several days for orientation. Should she go ahead and plan as though there would be ten or twelve, or plan for four? Should she visit those four families now, or wait until she knew who was going to be in her class?

Experiencing the First Day

At last the day came that Caroline had indirectly been working towards for years, and in earnest for the past two months; September 7, 1982: the first day in her chosen profession.

I arrived at the school at 8:20. Caroline had been there since 7:30 a.m. Everyone in the school was cheerful and friendly. Upon volunteering to give anyone a hand, Caroline quickly engaged me in punching holes in bright red apple name tags. As I punched, Caroline adjusted a letter of greeting to the parents, checked her plans for the day and rearranged a few items on the craft table.

Everything was in readiness. Each area in the room had large clear letters up indicating the activity (Art Center, Library Center, Cooking Center, Carpentry, Science, Math and Play House). Large laminated Pooh Bear posters appeared everywhere; giving directions, introducing poems, adding color and humor to the room. The Library Center was a carpeted area made more comfortable by one adult and two child-sized rocking chairs, a few cushions, an extensive display of storybooks, an interesting selection of pictures, and a big colorful calendar and weather chart.

Plants added a homey note, while new blue and white checkered vinyl covered the long cooking and craft tables. At the door a letter of greeting welcomed the parents

Dear Parents,

I hope you will enjoy your first day in the kindergarten. If you have not yet registered your child please go upstairs to the Library and return when you have finished. Please do the following:

1. print your child's name on a name tag.
2. discover the room together.
3. fill out some necessary forms while your child does a puzzle.

Thank you.

Caroline Thompson

At 8:30 a mother, kindergarten child, younger brother and sister arrived in the classroom. After a brief chat Caroline suggested "School does not start until 8:45. Perhaps you could wait outside until one of the teachers comes to get them." As the little boy's eager face fell, Caroline exclaimed "Oh we've spoiled it for him." As they left she turned to me "I'm just trying to enforce school regulations". (82.09.07) She felt badly that she had asked Jerry to leave, and yet she did have to follow school regulations, didn't she? As a new teacher to the school, she accepted the school regulations as law, and felt powerless to change them.

At 8:35 Mary (grade 3/4 teacher) came by Caroline's room. "I hope you have a really great morning - your first morning. If you need any help I'm right upstairs. Sometimes older children are good at comforting younger ones."

Between 8:45 and 9:20 parents arrived with children. Caroline greeted each and urged parents to read the letter as she took individual children around the room.

By 9:20 six children had arrived and Caroline gathered them in the Library Center where they sang *Here We Go Around The Mulberry Bush* and she read them *The Gingerbread Boy*. Throughout this group time, a tiny non-English speaking child clung to her Dad, emitting loud sobs whenever he attempted to leave. Her mom, (actually an Aunt) left, returning about ten minutes later with an even smaller child, her 3 year old cousin, After a lengthy (10 minutes) exchange between mom and daughter, the parents left the two girls at the puzzle table, both busy and happy.

The morning was characterized by many interruptions. At 9:35 the secretary came to check the enrollment - which was six. At 9:40 two city policeman arrived in the classroom, introduced themselves and after meeting each child wished them a good day and good year.

At 9:45 Caroline had the children line up behind her for a tour of the school. They located the boys' and girls' washrooms, the library, the main office, the health room where each child was weighed and measured, ending up in the principal's office. The principal welcomed each one of them to the school and assured them that "if they ever needed any help they could ask any big person at the school". (82.09.07) Upon returning to the classroom each child selected a library book to take home. As Caroline recorded their names I helped them place their books in navy book bags and locate a cubbie that was to be their special place to keep things.

Although one little boy was most anxious to play in the playhouse, Caroline brought them back together and talked about recess and getting their outside coats on. Most of the children needed help with buttons and zippers. Caroline and I then took them out to the playground and left them in the care of older girls and boys.

During recess the principal popped into Caroline's classroom with "How's it going?" Remember we have assembly right after recess. Mary came by "... just to see how its' going?"

At 10:30 the entire school (approximately 75) gathered in the library for assembly. Seated comfortably at the front of the assembly, the principal warmly welcomed the students to Autumn Leaf, and shared her hopes that it would be a good year for each of them. "We have a very special group of children with us this morning. Would the kindergarten class please come to the front." After introducing each child she spoke of the importance of older children looking out for the younger ones, and encouraged all to be friendly and helpful to those who were new to the school. Then she introduced other children who were new to Autumn Leaf and the staff. After reviewing the school rules and regulations, they sang a few favorite songs from last year.

Upon returning to their classroom at 11:05 Caroline commended her class "I felt you sat very quietly at assembly today. I was very proud of you." (82.09.07) Even on the first day of school, a teacher's success is somehow tied to her class's behavior. Caroline's six children had been quiet and orderly, so that was a positive score for her.

There was just time for everyone to get a paint apron on and paint a picture of themselves before home time at 11:24. As Caroline helped them with their coats and reminded them to take home their books and get someone to read it to them, a child bolted into her arms, gave her a big hug and chattered excitedly in Portuguese. It was Anna - who'd been so reticent about staying just two short hours before.

In response to my, "How did you feel the first day went, Caroline?" there was a tumble of comments

> I'm going to really have to watch Blair - he's so independent. I wonder what his listening skills are? He's a gentle soul but he's got his own mind ... I'm really really pleased with the kids. I'd heard so much about them being undernourished and disadvantaged. They all looked healthy, happy and normal to me....
>
> The parents looked good too. They seemed receptive to reading at home and coming into the school. I expect they'll be quite supportive.
>
> The principal was really lovely with them and had such a nice manner with them.
>
> I was disappointed with myself. I was too nervous, and I think they pick up on it. Things rushed by and I didn't feel I really got to know them. Tomorrow I must spend more time talking and listening to each of them.
>
> (pause) I guess it went pretty well.
>
> (Said emphatically and as a final summation of the day.)

Experiencing Autumn Leaf Community and School

The noisy traffic and tall glass and chrome edifices of the city centre are suddenly left behind as one literally drops over the river bank into a small peaceful district. In the fall, Autumn Leaf was alive with golden autumn colors and provided a very picturesque setting, with the river protectively winding its way around two sides while a steep hill kept the city at bay on the others. I could understand why Caroline had "fallen in love" with the area. It was a pleasant surprise to find such a tranquil community amid the busy downtown area.

Driving through the community I was struck by many contrasts: small older homes, some meticulously groomed, while others had taken on a shabby neglected appearance; new homes along side old ones; tiny single family dwelling surrounded by cedar town house complexes. Would the children reflect these contrasts too?

The prominent red brick two storey school is a historical landmark which has provided education for the local community since 1923. Some local families have long lasting ties with Autumn Leaf, as two or three generations have been educated in this very school. However, many families are recent immigrants to Edmonton, intent on establishing both linguistic and social ties.

Undoubtedly, some of the apparent tranquility of the area can be attributed to the fact that in 80% of the families, either the single parent or both parents are working while their children are at school.

Autumn Leaf School is a small inner city, eight room brick building, two stories high with attached gymnasium. There are approximately seventy-five children from kindergarten to grade six, with four teachers, a principal, secretary and custodian. When Caroline first visited the school, she was struck by the friendly, happy atmosphere of the school. It was the sort of place she felt she could be happy at. Most people reacted the same way, and I always felt accepted and comfortable when I visited the school.

The classes are organized on a 1/2 split, 3/4 split, 5/6 split with one small kindergarten class in the mornings. A large 5/6 class was making it difficult to provide individualized attention, so beginning December 6, the kindergarten teacher became a full time staff member working with the grade fives in the afternoons.

The kindergarten class is located on the basement floor along with the staff room and lunch room, while the grade one to six classes are housed on the second floor along with the library, office and science room. This meant Caroline and her six students were alone in the basement; isolated from everyone else. On several occasions, Caroline asked me to run upstairs to the office with messages, or check for missing children, because she felt she could not leave her young charges alone in the basement.

A school document[23] described some of the special and unique characteristics of Autumn Leaf as being

> - a very small school population K-6 (72) which lends itself to a family style of teaching and administration
> - students who are keen to learn and eager to help and care for each other
> - a dedicated staff who daily (constantly) talk, plan together and share ideas to best meet the needs of every student
> - a friendly, happy community.
>
> At Autumn Leaf 41% of our students come from single family homes. In 80% of our families the single parent or both parents are working. This means that it is particularly important that we provide an atmosphere that is tension free, relaxed and happy, while at the same time expecting high standards of behaviour and the utmost possible from each child. Every aspect of the child's development needs to be nurtured. (p. 2)

If "every aspect of the child's development" was to be nurtured, this would require special kinds of teachers. The document "School Belief" outlined what characteristics were felt to be important and what the teacher's role should be.

> Teachers must establish a suitable atmosphere in which learning can take place, get to know children as individuals and develop their powers of communication. The way in which teachers are responsible for the intellectual, social and emotional growth of children is determined by the kind of person he/she is and the circumstances in which he/she operates. The sort of person a teacher is affects the child profoundly. Good teachers attach great importance to the need to cooperate closely with the ideas and plans of children. Learning must fit the child. (p. 3)

Caroline's orientation clearly suited her for working in this setting. She too believed that teachers could have considerable influence on children, either turning them on or off learning. She also saw it as part of her role to communicate with parents, so she was prepared to accept the following:

> .... Teachers must concern themselves with each child's family and with the community which forms his background. Parents from lower sociometric groups rarely approach school to discuss the educational progress of their children. Therefore this initiative must come from the school. We will attempt to build a bridge of understanding and confidence between parent and teacher. (p. 3)

Even though most of the parents work, a real attempt is made to include them in school activities. Family nights have been popular with parents, children and teachers. A family night was organized early in the fall to which families were invited to participate in a variety of school-type activities set up in the classrooms. In the principal's words "Family Nights make them (parents) feel welcome at school and gives them some idea of what we're doing." (82.12.07) Teachers were enthusiastic too "One learns so much about the children by seeing them and their parents involved in an activity together." (82.11.08) Parents gave their endorsement by coming out in full force to a second one planned just prior to Christmas.

---

[23] A school document that had been prepared by the staff the previous year outlining school characteristics, beliefs, policies, and a proposed budget for the 1982/83 school year.

Caroline's caring manner and enthusiasm for children to get excited about learning, were clearly in line with additional school beliefs:

> We want our children to be learning kinds of people. As educators we will help to develop a process of learning that can be carried throughout life.
>
> Learning is a cooperative venture rather than a competitive activity. We encourage children to help each other, and to be sensitive to the attitudes of others ....
>
> We will ensure an affective climate that tells each child that he is loved and worthy, and a cognitive climate that allows each child to become competent as well as loved. (p. 2)

One of the schools long range goals is "to utilize community members within the daily program of activities.... to plan for year round participation so that parents and community people form a partnership with the staff." (p. 15)

Parents are encouraged to be involved in school activities when they're able, with one mom becoming an integral part of the music program, while another is in charge of the lunch program. A parent association formed this year had as one of its objectives the development and construction of an adventure playground at the school.

Feeling at Home at Autumn Leaf

I found going to Autumn Leaf was like visiting a large happy family where there was a lot of caring for individuals, numerous interesting projects going on, and animated discussions about special interests, needs and plans for future activities. From time to time, individuals had to be reprimanded, and occasionally family members had to be reminded that there was work to be done before that new project could get off the ground.

The school atmosphere, seemed to clearly reflect a statement in the school document outlining school beliefs. (1982, p.2)

> We will ensure an effective climate that tells each child that he is loved and worthy, and a cognitive climate that allows each child to become competent as well as loved."

Some of the activities planned to enhance this caring atmosphere while simultaneously encouraging intellectual curiosity, included a three-day fall camp, family nights, assembly and theme days once a week.

At Autumn Leaf it would be hard to remain an outsider whether you were a visitor, a new child, or a new teacher. By the first day of school, plans were under way for a school camp in September to enable staff and students to get to know each other in a non-academic setting.

Starting in October, a weekly event at Autumn Leaf was Theme Day on Thursdays when they did enterprise. Throughout the year, four or five themes were developed on a school-wide basis. Theme days promote a common pursuit, provide children and teachers with an opportunity to get to know each other, encourage older children to adopt a caring, helpful attitude towards younger children while challenging each child to investigate and develop a topic at their level of competence. The children are divided into five multi-age groups including kindergarten to grade six.

Caroline's reaction to the first theme day:

> The kindergarten children were involved in the morning and then went home. Last year, they weren't involved at all, but the principal really wants them to be involved more in all school activities. Everyone thought they fit really well. They liked it and I liked it because I got to know some of the older children." (82.10.08)

As kindergarten classes only attend school half days and operate on a different time schedule, they often are considered as separate from the rest of the school. Right from the beginning of the school term there were many indications that this would not be so at Autumn Leaf.

Another regular activity was Friday Assemblies. These always seemed to be pleasant, low-key school gatherings where children might be commended on meritorious behavior, reminded of rules and regulations, entertained by classmates' plays or musical accomplishments, or meet a visiting resource person.

Near the end of October, the whole school gathered in the library for a fairly typical assembly. It opened with the singing of *Let the Sun Shine In*, and then the principal addressed the group.

> I'd like to commend you on your exceptionally good behavior at the television station yesterday. I was really proud of you, especially when the station manager said what superb students you were. (82.10.28)

The kindergarten class made their debut performance by singing *Six Little Ducks*, and the grade ones and twos said a poem and sang a song. Then there was an interlude where staff members commented: Secretary: "I'm so impressed with how friendly everyone is this year." Custodian: "I'd like to remind you to be sure and use the boot racks so we can keep our halls clean." The program continued with two girls putting on a play, some school announcements, a piano solo and ended with the principal reminding the group that if they wanted to share something at assembly, they must be sure to see her ahead of time so she could schedule it in the program.

Upon returning to the kindergarten, Caroline talked with each child about how they felt while they were performing. Some had felt happy, a couple were scared and one couldn't remember the words of the song. Her sensitivity to their individual feelings and need for assurance was characteristic of her caring for them.

As Christmas approached, the frequency of assemblies increased. On December 8, the children had just settled down and were busy in their centres when Caroline remembered assembly, "Oh, I forgot there's assembly this morning to sing songs for family night." From 9:05 to 10:00 the class was down in the gym rehearsing. Upon returning, Caroline remarked, "See how hard it is to get anything done. It's like this every morning now." (82.12.08)

Caroline was beginning to have mixed feelings about the value of her children being involved in assembly. She wanted them to be part of school-wide activities such as assembly and theme days, yet found assemblies often required long periods of sitting still, singing songs that the children didn't really know the words to, listening to talks and discussions that were sometimes beyond their level of comprehension. Although she saw the value of her class feeling part of the school, she also resented the time they were involved in activities more suited to older children. As the frequency of assemblies increased, her frustration increased.

In addition to creating a warm, caring, intellectually stimulating atmosphere where children develop responsibility, the principal wanted this to carry over to the parents.

> That's a real emphasis of mine. I want the parents to feel comfortable and take responsibility.... Family nights make them feel welcome at the school as well as give them some idea of what we're doing. (82.12.7)

For the first "Family Night" in October, each teacher set up two or three regular classroom activities so children, together with their parents, could visit each of the classrooms and try out typical school activities like fingerpainting, or test themselves on some number quizzes, or try a science experiment, or play volleyball. Aside from the parents learning more about the school, the teachers felt they learned a great deal about the children:

> Caroline: "I was really surprised when two of the most macho boys in grade 5 came into the kindergarten and spent the whole evening building with Lego."
>
> Jan: "You sure learn a lot about children from watching them with their parents." (82.10.26)

The second family night combined a short concert of singing and band numbers, a sing-along, and an hour for parents and children to get involved in a couple of Christmas activities. Again each teacher was responsible for organizing and supervising two or three activities as well as contributing to displays in the halls and gym. Even though these family nights entailed a lot of extra work for the teachers, they seemed to look forward to the evening. During recess and noons prior to the occasion there was a lot of impromptu planning and cooperation with one teacher volunteering to pick up felt for the Christmas stockings, another getting candy canes when they got their groceries and someone else taking orders for extra honey comb for individual teachers' candle making. It was as though they were planning a party for friends. Yes, it was work, but when everyone pitched in it was fun too.

Becoming Established

Experiencing a Half-Time Position

It was Caroline's choice to work half time. She loved the atmosphere and approach at Autumn Leaf, so definitely wanted the kindergarten position there. If she did work full time this would mean being assigned to a kindergarten in another school, in another community. This would necessitate getting to know two staffs, two, possibly quite different, communities, having two classrooms to organize, two sets of materials and displays to prepare, attending two sets of meetings with staff and parents, as well as using every noon hour to travel from one school to another.

For someone who wants to work half time in early childhood education, a single kindergarten class can be ideal. They have responsibility for the total program, so can experience the satisfactions, and possibly frustrations, associated with the position. They have considerable freedom to develop the program as they wish rather than fitting into someone else's plan, as so many part time jobs require one to do.

However, for someone who wants to work full time, two kindergarten classes in two different schools can impose many additional problems. Caroline was adamant that she did not want to take on two different schools. She felt that with one class, she would be able to "really put a lot of effort into it and really do a tremendous job." (82.08.18) She would have her afternoons free to plan and her evenings free to spend with her husband. Caroline was in the fortunate position of not having to work full time. With her husband working and their house paid for, Caroline had fewer financial obligations than most graduating students.

Just prior to school commencing, Caroline expressed some concern over whether or not half time was "really going to keep her busy enough - challenged enough." (82.08.30) Having started planning in earnest for a kindergarten class the previous March, Caroline had long-range plans and unit plans completed, along with collections of related poems, pictures and stories. She had spent the entire summer painting and reorganizing her classroom, so it was ready too. Although she had not yet met her children, it appeared that there would only be five or six. With so few children to get to know and everything ready to go, she wondered what she would do to keep busy. Her uneasiness was heightened by other considerations too. Would they actually run a kindergarten with only five or six children? Although her principal assured her that kindergarten was a high priority in the school, and she planned to keep it open whatever the enrolment, Caroline knew enough about school systems to realize that principals get overruled sometimes. It's one thing to choose to work half time, and another not to have a job at all, or to face the possibility of being reassigned to another school or another grade at this late date.

By only working half time, this also delayed the receipt of her permanent certificate, which required two full years. Would this jeopardize her ability to retain a position in this time of tight job opportunities?

On September 7, six children registered for kindergarten. Even though the Early Childhood Coordinator maintained it took twenty children to make a kindergarten class financially viable the principal's commitment to the need for a kindergarten program in the area guaranteed its continuance.

By the second week of school Caroline had signed up to be a supply teacher for Autumn Leaf School in the afternoons "so I can get to know the older kids." (82.09.16) She was also excited about her discussions with the grade one / two teacher regarding the possibility of doing some gym and music activities together, with Caroline including some of the low grade one's in her kindergarten program.

Caroline was beginning to feel very embarrassed when people inquired where she was teaching and how many students she had. When she replied half-time and six students, friends and colleagues chortled and commented to the effect that it must be like having a paid holiday.

Throughout September Caroline volunteered to take on additional responsibilities, as though she were unconsciously compensating for her "light load". Caroline's enthusiasm for teaching young children and her desire to make education relevant to children was genuine. She really wanted to make a difference in what was happening for children. She wanted to have an impact on the field. To have people consider her job was a joke really hurt.

During the final week of September the school was off to Koinonia for a three-day camp. Although this was seen as an important opportunity for children and staff to get to know each other, the staff decided that it was too early in the year to include the kindergarten and grade one children. Caroline volunteered to stay at the school and incorporate the grade ones into her program. She felt really comfortable about her expanded enrollment of twenty-four, and was delighted at how well the two groups worked together.

> It's easier. I keep thinking, no Caroline, six has to be easier, but it's not. When there are more, they socialize and play together and help each other.... I'm not so frustrated, it's not so regimented as when there's only six. I like to interact with them, and with only six, I seem to have them all around me at one activity and then they all move on to the next. (82.09.23)

This experience convinced Caroline that it would be beneficial to do some family grouping in gym and language arts with the one / two class.

> It started as a joke. I told Jan I wasn't giving her grade ones back. She suggested we do gym together. Then she mentioned how much time she needs to spend on readiness with her grade ones. Well, I do readiness all the time, so I figured I could take the grade ones for that. We were a bit tentative at first about Betty's reaction, but she's really supportive, and is going to contact the Early Childhood Consultant. (82.09.23)

Caroline believed family grouping facilitated children progressing at their own level and pace, and felt it was preferable to single age/grade arrangements. When the grade one teacher indicated interest in minimal mixed age groupings, Caroline was ecstatic. She explained that Jan would move her grade one/two class downstairs to the classroom across from her. It would be so nice to have another class in the basement, and she and Jan might even jointly plan some centres to utilize the hallway.

Jan's enthusiasm for the project did not match Caroline's. One day in the staff room Jan had commented on how nice it was to have only sixteen students, rather than her usual twenty-five. "It was just heaven!" Caroline enthusiastically replied, "If our plan goes through it will be heaven all the time." Rather hesitantly Jan said, "Yes - I couldn't move right now. I just don't have the energy to move my whole classroom right now." (82.10.08)

Later that week the early childhood consultant visited the school. After a short visit to Caroline's room, she spent the remainder of the morning talking to Betty about the feasibility of family grouping. That afternoon Betty called Caroline and Jan into her office

> It's in your ballcourt now. I haven't finalized the funding yet, but the ECE consultant is very supportive. If we get funding we could hire Caroline full time and family group all day. Without extra funding we can still do it for half days. (82.10.08)

She went on to say she didn't want anyone to feel pushed. They could move into it that month, the next month, or whenever they felt ready. Although Caroline was impatient to get on with it, she realized Jan wasn't ready yet.

> I would like to start as soon as possible, but I'm aware of Jan's situation. She will have a lot more adjusting to do than me cause she'd have to move her room. It would be so much more productive if we were in the same part of the school. I don't like leaving things on hold. The sooner we get into it, the sooner all the children will benefit. (82.10.08)

However a couple of weeks later, the plans were still in limbo. Jan decided she couldn't consider moving her classroom downstairs, so suggested Caroline work with the kindergarten class in the morning and take her grade two's for extra work in the afternoon. As far as Caroline was concerned, that achieved none of the original objectives. Her class was not going to have any more interaction with other children, nor were the slower grade ones going to benefit from the concrete, activity-based program she offered. She made the alternative suggestion that she take four or five grade ones and four or five grade twos and have a family grouped K-2 class on a permanent basis.

While Caroline was still ready to "start tomorrow," the principal was very cautiously maintaining that everyone must be happy with the plan before they proceeded. It appeared that Jan really wanted out of the whole arrangement, and the principal was sensitive enough to give her that option.

In the meantime, Caroline became involved in a number of ongoing school activities. One of the school priorities for the current year was "to improve the speaking skills of the children." (School Document, p. 13) In order to determine growth it became necessary to assess each child's level of language ability at the beginning of the year. So for the first week of October, Caroline spent her afternoons engaging each child in conversation and taping it for later comparison. In addition to providing her with an opportunity to meet each child in the school and to feel she was really contributing to the school goal, there was a hidden benefit.

> I feel like a real live teacher now. I'm working full days and I really enjoy getting to know the children. (82.10.08)

Now she met the criteria of being a "real" teacher; she was involved full days with the children! However, the length of her day didn't vary much, for contrary to her earlier plans to spend evenings with her husband, this was not happening. She taught her kindergarten class in the morning, worked at the school during the afternoon ("I'm only working part time, but I feel guilty if I go home before four thirty." 82.10.01) and still she found she had more to do, so spent most of her evenings preparing materials and planning new activities. Her commitment to providing the best possible program she could, resulted in her using every available moment on school-related tasks. When her work eventually encroached on her evenings and weekends, her husband questioned, "If you teach only two and one-half hours a day, why can't you get things prepared in the other five and a half hours you're at the school?" This was rather hard to answer. It always seemed that there was another story to locate, game to make up or experience chart to redo so it would be letter perfect. By November things were reaching a crisis in the Thompson household.

> Kyle's been complaining - quite bitterly at points, but I just wasn't doing anything about it. Last weekend he just put his foot down and got really quite adamant that I was not going to do any school work. He wanted to take me out to look at show homes and for dinner. He's always inviting me out to do these sorts of things and I've been saying, "No, I can't. I've got school work to do." I didn't get away with that this time. I think I'm going to have to change my ways. (82.11.05)

Caroline felt that she was neglecting her husband, and yet she couldn't seem to change. She continued to spend most of her time on school work. What would it be like when she had a full-time position?

Conflicting Personal and Professional Responsibilities

When Caroline chose to work half time, it was partly so she would have more time for her personal life. Having been married just over a year, she felt it was important that she and her husband have some time together. Their first year of marriage had coincided with her final year in the B.Ed. program and she had spent most evenings working on assignments. In assessing her approach to University she commented, "I guess I have tunnel vision. If I get really interested in something, I devote all my time and effort to it - I guess to the detriment of all other courses and activities." (83.02.16)

Now that she had her own kindergarten class, *it* seemed to claim her time and effort. Early in the year she spoke of her absorption in her work, and how social encounters seemed to interfere.

> You know what I've often done when people came over in the evening. I've just come upstairs and worked rather than sit down there and socialize. So I think I'm going to have to allow more time for social things, because although Kyle's been very good about putting up with things so far, I think it probably will be a real strain if I don't give him the time he needs. I don't think he's asking for an unjustifiable amount of time either. (82.11.04)

It was as though Caroline was unable to give more of herself and her time to family and friends. Even though she was saying she needed to spend more time with her husband, she continued to devote most of her time to school-related activities. November brought report cards and parent conferences. With December came Christmas activities, preparing for family night and her move to a full-time position. As her school-related activities increased she felt she was getting further and further behind both at school and in her social responsibilities, and there never seemed to be any time for herself.

While her husband seemed to understand how busy she was, his mother did not. "My mother-in-law phoned to let us know they haven't seen us in a long time. I'm afraid she's rather disappointed in her daughter-in-law. She's never worked full time and doesn't seem to have any idea of how busy one can be." (83.12.06) On the other hand, Caroline's mother was also a teacher, and knew how busy one could be. Although

Caroline was sometimes critical of her Mom's dedication to her career, "I'm not going to make teaching a mission like you have." (83.01.08), she was following close in her path. Teaching was becoming her whole being.

Rather than providing a refreshing break, most of Caroline's Christmas holidays were spent in bed recuperating from exhaustion. She just hadn't had enough energy to go in to the school and do all the things she wanted to "and then Christmas is such a bad time buying gifts, decorating the tree, cooking Christmas dinner and visiting with friends you haven't seen all year, so you feel obligated..." (83.01.04)

Even during the Christmas break, Caroline's thoughts seemed to focus on school and other activities were considered an obligation. She did a lot of reading and thinking about her grade five class and worried that it was going to absorb all her time. "I should be resolving not to spend all my time on grade five. I tend to get super-enthused over something and spend all my time on that." (83.01.04) Caroline recognized this tendency in herself, and tried to justify why she might devote less time to her kindergarten class. "I only have so much time, so I'll have to spend it where there's the biggest need..." (83.01.04) which in her mind was clearly coming to terms with the grade five assignment.

Although Caroline stated, "I guess I just have to realize I can't be a perfect teacher this year - perfect in terms of how much I do, and how well I do in terms of doing what I know I should be doing, I'll just have to live with that..." (83.01.04), she continually strove to be that "perfect teacher". Her internal standards of acceptable teaching were very high. Her goal was for every child to be happy, "to feel there was something special about them." (83.06.22) She was prepared to invest a lot of her time and energy to make this happen, but sometimes it overwhelmed her. "I'm not meeting my ideals.... I want so much to be so good and I want to love it and stick with it forever, but it's so hard.... I feel really rotten about myself..." (83.02.16)

January, February and March were real "down" months for Caroline. She was not feeling good about her teaching and her personal life was undergoing tremendous upheaval. Outside of school, nothing seemed to matter any more - her relationship with her husband, her home, life around her seemed unimportant. Her husband was feeling shut out from her "new life". Her father died. She "just didn't care (about anything), and usually I'm a person who cares so much." (83.02.16)

By March her husband was prepared to leave her. If there wasn't room in her life for anything or anyone but teaching and "her children", he felt there was no purpose in remaining. Caroline's first thought was relief. "Well I guess that will give more time for school." (83.06.22)

In considering her priorities, Caroline readily acknowledges that in her life "her teaching comes first, her family and friends next and her own health last." (83.06.22) In reflecting upon her first year, being one of the six finalists for the Edwin Parr Teacher of the Year Award had earned her recognition as an excellent teacher, so clearly her first priority had been achieved. Her marriage was faltering and she'd had little contact with her friends so her second priority was rather unstable. Caroline herself was not in good shape at all; she had gained weight, had high blood pressure and the doctor said she was suffering from stress and exhaustion.

I am reminded of the movie *Mahogany* where a young woman was aspiring to be a first class model. Finally she "made it". Her picture appeared on the cover of *Vogue*, she was flown to Paris, Rome and Cairo on assignments. In the midst of all the glory came the realization that now she had reached the top she had no one to share her success with; her family, her friends she'd left behind. The picture ended with the thought, "How hollow success is when there's no one to share it with."

Caring for Children or *"How Many Children Have You?"*

Caroline is a person who cares a great deal about children. She believed parents and educators make a commitment to children, and if they do not fulfill this commitment, they have failed the children who are their responsibility.

Right from the first day of school, Caroline's concern for children came through. Earlier I described her concern when she feared she'd spoiled Jerry's first day at school by sending him out to the playground until it was "time" to come in.

Within a few days she was searching for ways to meet individual needs. "Sandy is almost ready to read. He might benefit from spending some time with the grade ones." When a child entered the room crying, Caroline put her arm around her and inquired what was the matter. Although she and the principal both were concerned about the delayed development of one little boy, she decided his self-concept was most important, so when the parents indicated their pleasure at how well he was doing at school, Caroline went along with it.

> I thought, that's just fine. I don't want them to start worrying at home and him pick up on it and start feeling he's a failure. Later I'll suggest a four-year primary program to his folks. (82.10.01)

When one little boy missed fifteen days of school, and Caroline's third phone call brought the response he was still sick - nothing specific, just sick - she arranged to do a home visit. Worried Jerry might lose touch with kindergarten and not feel comfortable when he returned, she hoped her visit would provide some continuity. Upon her arrival, she discovered Jerry was outside "roaring through the neighborhood and the mom was anxious to talk." She'd recently been divorced, was feeling depressed, found it hard to get up in the morning and claimed Jerry had a temperature every morning, which Jerry disputed. Caroline left feeling that Jerry's absence was more related to his mother's health than his own. She discussed the visit with the principal and the school nurse made a home visit. Even though Caroline realized the mother was not emotionally well, her major concern was the affect the mom's behavior was having on Jerry and his two younger siblings. As Caroline once again expressed her concern regarding the mom's depression and the living conditions, and implored the principal to do something, Betty cautioned her from becoming too involved. "Caroline, I can do a lot, but some things I just cannot affect. You've expressed your concerns to me and the nurse has made a visit, so you've covered your bases." (82.10.28)

Her concern for Jerry continued throughout the year. In December she spoke to his mom about his poor self-concept. "I've tried to keep the lines of communication open with his mom, because we sure won't make any progress if we're working in opposite directions." (82.12.02) In January the school doctor checked Jerry and dismissed his case as being "situational" so not to worry, there was nothing she could do. By May Caroline had the uneasy feeling that Jerry was deliberately engaging in self-destructive activities.

> He'll get on his two-wheeler and just barrel down a hill, take his hands off the handle bars and smash into things. The other day he was swinging back and forth on the bicycle rack. He took his hands off and fell face forward onto the gravel. I can't be sure, but it was as though he did it intentionally. I'm really worried about him. (83.05.29)

When Caroline was concerned about children, she sought assistance from others.

In Jerry's case, the nurse had tried to get his mother out of the house and involved in some social programs, but there seemed to be little help for Jerry himself. In Blair's case the nurse diagnosed him as having a learning disability while the doctor labeled him "hyperactive". Caroline was infuriated that Blair should be so labeled.

> If you've got a child who's enthusiastic, sparkling, high energy level and those things, I don't think he should be labeled hyperactive. I read the doctor's report. It was full of medical terminology and no suggestions for what to do. (83.01.04)

She was indignant the doctor should have labeled Blair hyperactive without giving any concrete suggestions for what to do with him. To merely label him, and then leave them with no more idea of what would be helpful for him than before, was unforgiveable. If he was a *school* doctor then he should be able to relate to the school in a more positive way.

Caroline not only had high expectations of herself in relation to children; she also had high expectations of others who claimed to be involved with children.

During the first Local Advisory Committee[24] meeting, Caroline was sharing her plans for the year and some of her expectations for the parents, like reading every day with their child, showing enthusiasm and interest in what they were doing at school. Feeling pretty good about how the meeting was going, she decided to bring up the possibility of having a parenting course. Caroline believed it was a real necessity. "After all, parents don't have any training to be parents and it could provide a support group for the moms." (82.10.01) Caroline was not alone in her feeling; the Ontario Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child made the following statement:

> The briefs presented to our Commission and supported by eminent scholars and authorities the world over suggest that parents are often ignorant of the needs of children at various stages of development ... the school has nevertheless failed and does not offer appropriate programmes of studies which would assist parents in fulfilling their role as educators and allow the family to be a safe place in which to grow. (1980:53)

The suggestion that people should take a "parenting course" inevitably seems to imply to parents that they aren't doing a good job and consequently gets a negative response. When Caroline brought this up, one of the moms immediately replied, "I've got three kids. How many do you have?" As the mom queried each person at the meeting, the answers revealed that everyone but Caroline had three or four children. With an air of satisfaction, the mom concluded, "I don't think *we* need any courses on parenting." (82.09.30)

---

[24] Local Advisory Committee usually referred to as LAC. A group of parents and community workers established to work with teachers of kindergarten programs in an advisory capacity.

This is the ultimate put down for educators who do not have children of their own. Parents are quick to assume that because they have children, they know all about them. A teacher who has no children is held highly suspect. Having experienced both sides of this issue myself, I feel parents are partially justified in feeling that a childless person can't really understand what it is like to be responsible for children twenty-four hours a day. On the other hand, I have great respect for the amount of knowledge, understanding, and caring a teacher like Caroline can have for children. As a parent one can easily become so involved with their children and family life that it is sometimes difficult to see what really is best for them, or what effect one's actions are having on them. A teacher who has studied child development and has come to understand children through a variety of experiences with many different children can bring an objectivity and broader understanding to the situation. Caroline was a very sensitive, caring person who is genuinely concerned with the welfare of children. Through sharing responsibility for bringing up a nephew, she felt she understood how difficult and lonely parenting can be. Nevertheless, "how many children have you?" is a question she'll undoubtedly meet again and again in her career as a teacher.

Getting Things Perfect

When Caroline gets involved in something that interests her, she's prepared to devote unlimited time to it to make sure it is the very best she can do. With reference to her working habits at University, she commented

> If I worked for twenty hours I might get an eight, but to get a nine I might have to put in 500 hours. The time and the marks didn't really matter. I had to feel it was my best. (82.11.08)

Over the summer holidays Caroline spent weeks organizing and reorganizing her room until she felt it was just right. All her posters, charts and signs were meticulously prepared and laminated giving them a professional appearance.

The first day of school she had been positive about the children, the parents, and the staff, but critical about her own performance. Even though she had come across to me as a warm, caring, sensitive teacher, she was disappointed in her nervousness and felt she hadn't *really* gotten to know the children.

Late in September, Caroline shared her feelings regarding her first visit from the Early Childhood Consultant, Melinda (her mom's colleague and friend)

> The principal told me half an hour before she was coming. I was glad she hadn't told me the night before or I'd have worked til midnight preparing. (82.10.08)

Initially, it was very important to Caroline that everything be extremely well prepared if she was having visitors. As she gained confidence, she became more comfortable with the principal or visitors dropping in unannounced. In fact by November, she expressed a desire to have other people in class.

> Actually, I've often thought it's nice to have other people in my room because you're more aware of what you're doing, whereas if you're by yourself you aren't so aware. I think it's good to be really aware of what you're doing and what you're saying. (82.11.05)

Now Caroline was confident enough that she was doing a good job, that she no longer saw visitors as a threat. In fact, the presence of another adult served as a mild stimulant, that brought out the best in her.

Although Caroline was fairly apprehensive about taking on the grade fives in December, once she agreed to do it, she set high expectations for herself. She was a good kindergarten teacher, so she would become a good grade five teacher. After her initial two weeks with grade fives, she realized twelve grade five students were an entirely different entity than her six kindergarten children. When she returned to school in January, she was "scared" she really couldn't handle the grade five situation. Not because of the expectations of the principal, but because of her own high expectations of herself. Could she continue to do a super job of the kindergarten, a good job in themes, *and* develop the grade five program into an exciting learning experience? She had her doubts.

She was beginning to feel that her expectations were not reasonable under the circumstances.

> I guess I just have to realize I can't be a perfect teacher this year. Well, perfect in terms of doing what I know I should be doing. I'll just have to live with that and accept I can only do so much. (83.01.04)

It was difficult for Caroline to accept that she had to settle for less than perfect in something that she cared about as much as teaching.

Making a Difference

Caroline really wanted to make a difference in education.

> I would like to make a difference in the lives of the children that I come in contact with. And I would like to make a difference in the profession as a whole. (82.11.05)

Katz (1977) reports that most beginning teachers are concerned with survival in the first few months of their first year; but not Caroline. Her years of debating educational topics with her mother and colleagues, combined with her own experience and dedication to young children, resulted in a definite conviction of what was right for children.

> There are certain things I really do feel we need to look at in our system ... A four-year primary program is something we really should be starting. I'd like to see some primary type classrooms where you have early childhood groupings - K through 3. Then you could have more concrete things happening in those rooms and the children could progress at their own rate in a natural sort of way. (82.11.05)

This strong belief in "a better way to do it" governed many of the decisions Caroline made.It was the basis on which she chose her school.

> That's why I chose Autumn Leaf, because the principal was open ... she was supportive of family grouping ... I chose that school knowing it would be open to the kinds of thoughts I have. (82.11.05)

It was important for Caroline to be in an atmosphere that was supportive of her own philosophy. The school philosophy as outlined in the "School Document" closely paralleled her own. She had predicted it would be a school she could be happy in, and it was proving to be so.

Early in September, Caroline and Jan, the grade one/two teacher, discussing the possibility of doing some joint activities. In this way, some of Caroline's children who were already beginning to show readiness to read, could be stimulated by being with older children, and the grade ones and twos who were having difficulty, could benefit from the concrete, play experiences Caroline was providing. By the end of September, the principal had called in the Early Childhood Consultant to discuss the feasibility of family grouping the kindergarten, and grade ones and twos. Caroline had judged correctly in that the principal and Early Childhood Consultant would be supportive of family grouping. They did share her concern about children not being allowed to move smoothly from level to level as they were ready.

By November, Caroline really had a feeling Autumn Leaf might "go to family grouping in the next few years." When I asked how much she felt she'd influenced this decision, she responded, "Well, I went in with certain things I wanted to achieve this year - ah - at least introduce, and I think it's made a difference." (82.11.05) However, she was cautious about claiming all the credit. "... everybody brainstorms so you don't really know where the idea comes from...", and she went on to say, "We're walking in that direction anyway, with family grouping (K-6) one day a week for themes." (82.11.05)

Early in January the entire staff at Autumn Leaf went on a two-day retreat to consider "directions for next year". They considered the needs of the children, and of the staff. They examined teaching/learning styles and expectations, and established some goals for the coming year. Each teacher had an opportunity to talk privately with the principal about their personal aspirations, as well as those they had for the school. Caroline shared her preference for family grouping and suggested two K-3 classrooms. She felt Betty would be very open to everyone's suggestions, and then have to make the decisions she felt were best for the school. "Naturally I see it (family grouping K-3) as the very best decision. I can't see why anyone would want to do anything else. (chuckle)" (83.01.14) Caroline truly believed it to be the best decision, but was now aware that not everyone on staff saw things the same way.

> In my enthusiasm, and perhaps my lack of experience, I don't see the total picture the way someone like Betty can. (83.01.14)

Much of Caroline's enthusiasm was overshadowed by her grade five experience during the next few months, but her hope for an early childhood family grouping never dimmed. She was convinced that it was the best way of enabling young children to develop and learn in an environment that was suited to their particular needs.

When Caroline attended inservices, she was alert to any indications of interest and support for family grouping. In January, she was ecstatic when the Early Childhood Coordinator spoke of increasing board support for moving some of the kindergarten practices (concrete, manipulative, play experiences) into the primary grades. Caroline saw this as an important step in meeting the special needs of six, seven and eight year olds. She also saw board approval as important. "Now you have the blessing of the board, you can go ahead with a greater sense of security." (83.01.12)

Experiencing Support

Support came in several ways for Caroline. Sometimes it was offered formally, sometimes informally. Other times it was actively sought by Caroline.

Right from the beginning Caroline found herself in a supportive situation at Autumn Leaf.

> The whole staff is very supportive. Mary (grade 3/4 teacher) has a tremendous enthusiasm for kindergarten. She used to teach it. The principal is one hundred percent supportive - she never overwhelms or overburdens me, and I feel I could talk to her about anything. There is just a different atmosphere from other schools ... little things - like someone will bring you a cup of tea when you're working in your classroom. (82.09.07)

As Caroline readied her classroom in the final few days before school commenced, the principal and other teachers kept popping in to inquire how things were going, or comment on the attractiveness of the room, or show interest in a particular centre. On the first morning, Mary came by to offer her assistance and later checked to see how things were going. The principal came by at recess to see how Caroline was managing. Throughout the fall those two people frequently popped in to see how things were going or to bring some information about a school activity or a child.

In response to my question about special treatment for a beginning teacher, the principal replied:

> I try to treat all my teachers in a caring way. That doesn't help you much does it? Well, I may explain fire drill procedures to the whole staff, but I'd go and watch Caroline's to see that everything was going fine, or I've put in writing and said verbally that if any of them want me to sit in on particular interviews, I'd be glad to - but with Caroline I'd go to her and say "How are you feeling about interviews? Do you feel you'd like me to sit in on any?"

Caroline regularly received written support in the way of "a card to our beginning teacher" or a note, or a cartoon with a cheery greeting or words of encouragement. At the time of first report cards, Caroline received the following note from the principal:

> *Caroline*
> *Your report cards are delightful reading. Your love of kids and kindergarten comes through every line!*
> *I'm absolutely amazed at the growth of each child, and what the class has accomplished.*
> *You can feel tremendous about your first term.*
> *And may more wonderful things be in store for term #2!*
> *Betty*

Perhaps due to Mary's special interest in kindergarten, combined with her supportive, nurturing nature, she was always finding just the right story, an appropriate poem, or a special advent calendar which she'd slip into Caroline's mailbox. These always added a special note to Caroline's day. One day as she returned to her room unrolling a delightful poster she exclaimed, "Every first year teacher should have a warm, positive, sweet teacher like Mary for a buddy." (82.12.02)

The staff was small and worked together cooperatively in planning school activities. Right from the first staff meeting, Caroline's contributions and ideas were encouraged and valued. Her artistic ability was called upon when cartoons were needed to celebrate a special occasion or add humor to an event. Caroline was the one chosen to represent Autumn Leaf on television when CFRN featured their school. Indirectly these actions were telling Caroline she was accepted as a valued member of staff.

Caroline did feel comfortable about going to the principal to talk things through. About the third week of school she was overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy. In talking this through with the principal she was relieved to find that often teachers tend to be self-critical and concerned about whether they're doing the right thing. Knowing that she was not alone in her doubts, along with receiving positive comments about her teaching ability, provided important reassurance to Caroline.

Within the Edmonton Public School System it is the principal's responsibility to provide two formal evaluations of teachers in their probationary year. At Autumn Leaf the principal's approach to evaluation was

> With Caroline I go in and sit and observe and then provide written and/or verbal feedback. With the others I'm constantly in and out and commenting on things but don't actually sit and observe and provide written feedback. (82.12.07)

The verbal and written comments provided valuable feedback to Caroline on a regular basis. A few sample comments from the principal's observation give an idea of the positive reinforcement they were providing.

> *You provided clear directions and clear expectations for the children.*
> *You made the new child feel welcome.*
> *There is an atmosphere of fun in your classroom.* (82.10.28)

Initially, Caroline appreciated the principal's consideration in arranging to come in for evaluation on days when she already was expecting a visitor, but by November she had told the principal, "I don't really want to know when you're evaluating me." "It's better if she just pops in. Actually I felt a lot more strongly at the beginning of the year than I do now. I probably have a lot more confidence now than I did then.... Now she just arrives and says 'This is evaluation day'." (82.11.05)

By the time the first formal evaluation had to be prepared, both the principal and Caroline seemed comfortable with the ongoing evaluative arrangement, so it was not a traumatic experience.

In fact, when Caroline's copy of her evaluation arrived as a pink scroll tied with a white ribbon it was cause for great jubilation.

> It was all 100% positive. I look like such a good teacher on paper! In student teaching I always got outstanding marks and tons of positive comments, but they usually ended with 'You might try such and such'. Not really a negative comment but a how-to-improve type of thing. But I didn't get that from Betty. It was all positive and I thought 'I've made it!' (laughter) I felt really really good. You know I do things and I know the reasons and there are lots of little reasons that go into everything, but you figure no one else knows why. But Betty had picked up on all those little reasons...." (82.11.05)

Another source of evaluation came from the Early Childhood Services consultant.

> Melinda was in a couple of times to observe Blair, and she said some really nice things and that made me feel good too. So I guess I've had more than my fair share. You can go for a long time on that sort of stuff. (82.11.05)

In addition to receiving a great deal of positive support and encouragement within the school, Caroline has her own personal support system.

Throughout her early interest in teaching, the intervening years of preparing to be a teacher, and in this initial year as well, Caroline's mother, also a teacher, has been available for reassurance and counsel. "Because Mom's a teacher, we've always discussed educational issues - politics, philosophies, etc." (3.02.16) Having a mom who'd experienced not only classroom teaching, but consultative and administrative roles enabled Caroline to have a broader understanding of the education field than many beginning teachers. Early in the term, Caroline shared

> I feel pretty confident as a new teacher. I'm familiar with the system. I know who the people are I can turn to. From my year as a teacher's aide, I understand school routines, staff meetings and things like that. I don't have to face all those adjustments that most first year teachers do. (82.10.01)

Caroline did seem to have an edge over most beginning teachers in feeling at home with the system. Perhaps this was one reason why she was not so concerned about survival and able to consider making an impact upon the system. If we are a stranger in a situation, much of our energy and time is taken up becoming familiar with the norms of the situation, leaving little time to promote creative, innovative ideas.

In October, Caroline discussed her music program with the music consultant and found her to be most helpful in suggesting materials and approaches. She contacted the school nurse about concerns she had regarding two children in her class. Later in the year she requested assistance from the language arts consultant. Caroline was not hesitant in seeking help when she wanted assistance with her program or with particular children. She knew these people were there to help, so she took advantage of their services.

The Edmonton Public School Board has developed a number of activities to provide support for new teachers to their system. The first of these was an invitation to all teachers new to the system, both neophyte and experienced, to attend a New Teacher Orientation meeting at the Edmonton Public School Board Administration Building on September 1. There were around eighty to ninety teachers in attendance, with approximately one third of them new to teaching. The two New Teacher's Consultants introduced themselves and offered information on teacher responsibilities, answers to frequently asked questions, resources available, consultants and resource centres. There was a series of four New Teacher Inservices, as well as a number of sessions offered by the Early Childhood Consultants. Although Caroline attended a couple of New Teacher sessions, and enjoyed meeting the consultants and other new teachers,she found much of the orientation information unnecessary for her. On the other hand, she attended most of the Early Childhood Inservices and felt she was among colleagues who were trying to promote the same cause.

On the personal side, Caroline found her husband very supportive of her as a person, and felt he was the one person who could jolt her into the realization that life exists beyond the classroom. However, as the year progressed she sensed a growing lack of support that eventually began to undermine her confidence in her teaching self. Although Caroline often sees "that other life" as an intrusion into her dedication to her career, it may well keep her emotional, mental life in balance. By November Caroline began to realize that her husband had some legitimate claim to her time.

> I'm going to have to allow more time for social things, because although Kyle's been very good about putting up with things so far, I think it probably will be a real strain if I kept this kind of pace up and didn't give him the time that he needs. I don't think he's asking for an unjustifiable amount of time. (82.11.05)

Near the end of October, Caroline and a University classmate, also a first-year teacher, met for lunch and invited me along. This was their first talk since summer, and it was characterized by an outpouring of feelings about their teaching situations, their achievements, frustrations and aspirations.

Early in their exchange they established that I was "trustworthy" and would not betray their confidence, so they spoke freely of their innermost feelings. They felt like two kindred spirits cast into a world of strangers. On one hand, Connie found it foreign, constantly challenging and requiring a great deal of growth and change for her to survive. On the other hand, Caroline found her new world comfortable, reassuring and very supportive of the ideals she believed in. It provided her with not only an opportunity to try out and refine her ideas, but a chance to make an impact on educational practices. Connie shared her difficulty in really getting to know and spend time with twenty-three five year olds, whereas Caroline spoke of "her difficulty in getting good child-child interaction going with only six, and the fact they do every activity, everyday." (82.10.28) Connie's school was providing her with a totally new experience. "It's not like 404.[25] I just had to change my whole attitude and approach and put all my ideas on hold. I just keep my eyes open and go along with the momentum." On the other hand Caroline felt she was encouraged to have input into what happened at Autumn Leaf. "Every suggestion I make is carefully considered by staff.... We may even move into family grouping at our school..." (82.10.28)

Although Connie was not finding it an "easy" year, she did feel she was learning a great deal about alternative ways to work with children. She accepted that to survive at that particular school, she "had to do it their way". She was what Nash (1963) would refer to as "the adaptable stranger", one who "learns to organize his experiences more and more in terms of the realities of the new situation." He goes on to say that "greater familiarity with the hosts and their ways tend to make him more aware of the gulf which separates him from them." (471) This seemed to be true for Connie. Fortunately, she was able to adapt to the strange situation. Caroline did not feel she could have worked in a manner so antithetical to her beliefs. She had wisely sought and found a school with a similar belief system to her own in which she could function.

---

[25] Ed. Cl 404. A senior course in the Early Childhood Education specialization that Connie and Caroline had taken the previous year.

Another Beginning

Initially Caroline had elected to start off with a kindergarten class half time, so she would be able to do her planning in the afternoons and have her evenings free.

However, by the end of October, Caroline was quite excited about the possibility of taking on additional responsibilities. "I'll take 4 or 5 grade ones, 4 or 5 grade twos and have a family grouped class of K-2." Upon inquiring when this would happen she replied, "Betty's very cautious and wants to make sure everyone's happy with the arrangement before moving into it. She's checking everything out carefully. I'd be ready to start tomorrow!" (82.10.28)

Throughout the fall, Caroline's enthusiasm for the proposal steadily rose while Jan's seemed to dwindle with increasing reasons why she couldn't make the switch right now. "I'm too tired to move right now. I'm just getting settled now. It's too soon for a change." (82.10.08)

By the end of November all these plans had changed. Caroline did take on some additional responsibility but in quite an unexpected area. At an internal school professional development day, each staff member had assessed their work loads and student needs, and the decision was made that the 27 students in the grade five/six split needed more individualized attention. Caroline was asked if she would take the twelve grade fives in the afternoons for language arts, music, art and social studies. Having specialized in Early Childhood Education, Caroline felt grade five was really not her area, so suggested Betty hire someone else. However, the principal did not want to introduce another staff member during the year, and was confident that Caroline could handle them just fine. Contrary to the earlier policy of not rushing into new arrangements, this change was to occur the following week. Caroline expressed some concerns about her new assignment.

> I'm really worried. I don't think I'd mind if I could just do what I want to, but I'm going to have to do certain things in certain ways. (82.12.02)

In kindergarten, Caroline felt she really understood and could relate to the age group. She was also very familiar with appropriate activities and experiences to involve them in. However, in grade five, she would be dealing with an age group that she did not know nor understand very well, and then there was that curriculum! Not only were there provincial curriculum guides, but all the guide books in the various subjects. It would be fine if she could just share with them her love of language and literature - encouraging them to read and write, but she didn't really know what the objectives for grade five language arts were.

> Everyone's overwhelming me with confidence but I don't feel it. Remember last year I said 'only kindergarten. Grade one - no way' and here I'm teaching grade 5. I'm feeling pushed. (82.12.02)

Caroline acted as though she were in a daze and not quite sure of what she'd let herself into. Even though everyone else at the school was confident she could handle it, she herself was not. She did not know the curriculum, she did not know the age group, she had not student-taught in upper elementary, she did not want to teach anything but kindergarten; so why had she said yes?

> I guess I didn't want to let down the rest of the school. It all happened so fast. If I'd had more time to think about it, I don't know if I'd have agreed to do it. (83.01.05)

That Friday, Caroline met with Ernie to make arrangements for the half-time transfer of grade fives starting the following Monday afternoon.

On the first morning of Caroline's new teaching assignment I had noted in my log "Caroline seems really chirpy, calm and looking forward to the day. Dressed in a black skirt, white blouse and red wool vest, cheerful, happy, smiley - more relaxed than the first day of kindergarten." (82.11.06) Amid a flurry of putting up posters and getting materials out, her comment to me was

> I was going to come over on the weekend, but decided not to. Then I was going to come in early this morning. I set the alarm for five but didn't get up. I decided I might not be quite as prepared but much better rested and able to cope. (82.12.06)

This was not typical of Caroline's behavior, for she usually wanted every detail planned and ready. However, she certainly was more relaxed and ready to face her new assignment than she had been a few days earlier. Her apprehension from last week seemed to be replaced by an aura of confidence.

> L. Caroline, you seem so happy today, I feel you're actually looking forward to the grade fives.
>
> C. Yes, sort of. I'm feeling pretty good about them.
>
> L. Ernie (the grade 5/6 teacher) must have been very reassuring at your meeting Friday.
>
> C. Yes, they both were - both Betty and Ernie are really confident that I can do it.
>
> L. They should be a pretty good judge of what you can handle by now. (82.12.06)

Caroline had thought through her afternoon and was determined to be firm yet flexible and democratic.

> Rules - I'm starting off in a good authoritarian way. I'll have them in groups to discuss rules and deterrents. Then we'll move furniture around or if that doesn't seem appropriate at the time I'll have them do silhouettes and I'll mount them. (82.12.06)

On the chalkboard Caroline had a note of greeting to the grade fives, the students' names divided into three groups of four, and the following list of activities:

1. What's Happening?
2. Classroom Rules
   - group discussion
3. Arrangement of Room
   - what do we need
   - where shall we put it

After lunch, Caroline went upstairs to the grade five/six room to collect her new students. The grade five/six teacher explained that the new arrangement "would provide more opportunity for individualization". With that, the grade fives picked up their supplies and followed Mrs. Thompson downstairs to their new classroom. At the door, she paused, "I want you to check your name on the board and sit at the table with that number on it. Let's establish one rule right now. I can only listen to one student at a time."

Once the students found their places, a question-answer period followed regarding the change. "Do we come every afternoon? Can we have a games centre? Do we get gym?"

This was accompanied by talking, giggling, moving chairs, tapping tables, and shuffling. Mrs. Thompson, "Different people have different tolerance of noise levels. I find tapping on desks very irritating." The students quieted down, then one asked, "Why do we have to sit at tables like this? Upstairs the girls all sat at one table and the boys all sat together." With a twinkle in her eye Mrs. Thompson responded, "I don't have a beard, or moustache or glasses. I'm not Mr. Kutz, I'm Mrs. Thompson and I do things differently. Now, I want to get on with the next activity, 'Classroom Rules'." She gave some examples of behavior and a natural consequence and then instructed each group to come up with a set of rules for their classroom along with a fair and natural consequence for breaking them. Groans and "can we do our own list?" Caroline moved around from group to group, encouraging them to work together in establishing rules and suggesting consequences. As she walked around she paused by children not on task until they settled down, and scowled at others who were being disruptive.

As each group shared their rules, Caroline wrote them on the board, discussing and clarifying some points and making statements like, "I'm so pleased with how quietly you're sitting and listening. That's a good point. So far each group has come up with lots of different ideas. Perhaps that one could be covered by number 3." In total, they'd come up with thirty rules as compared to the three Caroline had drawn up.

A knock at the door brought a message for Caroline. "You've now taught grade five for an hour. They'll love you. Mary." The remainder of the period was spent on reaching a consensus about consequences.

At recess the grade six teacher challenged Caroline and her grade fives to a volleyball game. This seemed to have a calming effect on the students, for upon returning to the classroom they settled right down and concentrated on writing a letter of thanks to the mom who helped with the music program. The classroom atmosphere was calm and task oriented. Almost a complete turn around from the first period which appeared to be a constant testing of limits.

At 3:37 Caroline announced home time and ended the day with

> I'd like to thank you all very much. I was a little nervous about teaching grade five cause it's my first time. I think it went well, and we'll have lots of good times together. (82.12.06)

At the end of the first afternoon, Caroline seemed fairly pleased with how things had gone. Later that day she reflected on how she had prepared for taking over the older class:

> I prepared myself emotionally. I had to do a change of mind set for grade fives. One can't talk the same way to them as to kindergarten.
>
> I always have an alternative plan in the back of my mind; to do in case of ... In kindergarten you have a built-in alternative. You can close down an activity and have them go to centres because they always like to play in blocks and the house area. With grade five it's different, so I've got lots of independent activities and games if we needed to close down.
>
> Last week I started a grade five file of things I want to do with them. For some reason I thought I'd have to find totally new resources, but I found that I went back to those I was familiar with and just modified many of them.
>
> I made the principal sit down and talk to me about survival in grade five. She told me a lot of things that were the same as in kindergarten - but some that were different.

> The grade five/six teacher gave me some information about some of the children - ones to watch, etc. (82.12.06)

Now that Caroline was facing a new unexpected assignment she was becoming concerned about "survival". With only two weeks to the Christmas holidays, Caroline set her objectives for grade five as "getting to know each other, organizing the room, some long range art projects, tie in lots of language arts related to Christmas, but not worry too much about the curriculum areas." (82.12.06)

On the second afternoon, Caroline reviewed the rules and consequences. The class was quietly attentive and seemed full of anticipation.

> We have a lot of work to do today because we have to get this room organized. I'm going to give each of you a sheet of paper and I want you to write down the things you'd like to see in this room. You might want certain centres like a listening centre with a record player and earphones, an art centre with special supplies set out. (82.12.07)

When one child asked about a video centre, Caroline cautioned them to "stay within reason".

Later as they were discussing their ideas, the principal dropped in, "How's grade five going?" An enthusiastic "Fine". The principal smiled, "I see you have rules. Who made those?" Students, "We did." Principal, "And consequences too. What are consequences?" Students, "What happens." Caroline, "They've all written up what they want in the room too." Principal, "That should be interesting." Then she went on to caution them, "It's going to be 30 below tonight so be sure and wrap up warmly on your way home." (82.12.07) A warning that probably wasn't necessary for grade fives, but it did provide a legitimate opportunity for the principal to drop by and see how things were going.

The classroom provided for the grade five class had previously been used as a combined storage and lunch room. On Wednesday, armed with their plans for the desired environment they wanted to create, the grade fives enthusiastically started clearing the room of unwanted books and supplies, rearranging tables and shelves, gathering wanted supplies and putting up displays.

At recess Caroline commented, "I'm so tired I'm just letting them go to it. If it had been the beginning of the year I'd really have to watch myself or I'd have been charging ahead doing it all myself." (82.12.08)

Although Caroline seemed to be handling her added responsibility for grade five in a relaxed, orderly manner, she had not been her usual warm cheerful self with the kindergarten class that morning.

After spending nearly an hour in the gym rehearsing songs for family night, the kindergarten class had returned to their classroom. For the remainder of the morning Caroline was tense, abrupt with the children and really pushed them to finish their art activity.

When the children left, I commented on how worried and unlike herself she was. She came over, sat down, and started talking.

> The pressure has really been building up over the past couple of weeks. There's family night coming up, so the art projects have to be up, and then the change. For the last two weeks I've hardly had any time with my own class. We've been up in Assembly until nearly ten each day, and then Thursday is theme day so I don't have them and next week there's something on every day. I haven't done anything Christmasy with them. When I go into someone's room I look to see what children's work they have up and is it current. I look to see what they're doing in the Math Centre. I haven't done any Math or Science for ages. I haven't even read them a story, and I think that's so important to read to them every day. (82.12.08)

Caroline had high expectations for anyone who worked with young children. If they weren't able to do what was right for children, she felt they shouldn't be in education, and now she herself was not living up to her expectations. She was short changing "her" children; not only of some of the special Christmas experiences she felt they should be having, but of some of those very basic experiences in language.

> I also feel a lot of pressure to get art work done for the gym, and it has to be large so it shows up. If I'd seen a teacher do what I did today (paint some of the lights for the children's art project) I'd have said isn't that awful. I'd like to do Christmasy things in my room - it doesn't even look Christmasy and now with two rooms - I don't feel either looks Christmasy. The activities for family night is just one more thing to get ready for. (Caroline was responsible for setting up three centres; candle making, play dough ornaments and Christmas stockings). (82.12.08)

Although Caroline believed in the value of family night, and willingly took on a number of tasks related to it, she was experiencing so many demands on her time, that she was having real difficulty coping with it all.

> I know there are lots of good reasons for the children to be involved in Assembly. They really are a part of the school, they learn lots of new songs, and get to know the older kids - but it takes so much time. When I think of the kids - Blair really dislikes going up, Sean doesn't seem too comfortable in large groups, sometimes Julie does and sometimes she doesn't. The only one that really seems to enjoy the singing is Trudy, and she's not even

supposed to be singing Christmas songs![26] (82.12.08)

Caroline was not alone in experiencing a build-up of pressure prior to Christmas. Many people overcommit themselves at this time of year with books, workshops and articles directed to the issue such as *76 Ways to Get Organized for Christmas*. When you combine a natural tendency of people to get too busy in their personal lives at this time of year, with the many added responsibilities of a teacher to prepare special events for concerts, family nights, et cetera, along with the super charged atmosphere young children can create as they become excited by Christmas preparations, it is not surprising a stressful situation can precede this holiday period.

Finally the Christmas holidays came - and went. Caroline had managed to keep herself, her kindergarten class, and her grade fives going until the two-week break brought some relief. On the last day of school before Christmas Caroline had remarked to the principal,

> Gee, I don't feel tired at all. I think I could go on for a few more weeks. She said, "You're tired, believe me. You're just running on nervous energy. You'll feel it." She was right, I did. Saturday and Sunday I had a headache, and Monday I was in bed. (82.12.17)

Once Caroline's responsibility to her teaching was over, she literally fell apart, and required most of the holidays to recover from a case of flu and exhaustion. When she returned to school in January, she was still tired. In reflecting on this, she commented,

> I did not realize how tired I was and how much I needed a rest. When I look back I see a big difference in me from the beginning of term to just before Christmas. I didn't have nearly as much patience or fun. I was pressuring the kids to get things done. It was really an unbelievable time. I'm glad to be back teaching, but I just don't have the same energy level now that I did in the fall. (83.01.04)

Even though the two-week break from school did not provide the rejuvenation Caroline had hoped for, she did feel much more positive about her grade five class in January.

> Grade five's just great. The room has changed. I made curtains over the holidays. The centres are starting to develop. (83.01.04)

Before Christmas, Caroline had acknowledged that the grade five students seemed excited about planning and beautifying their own room. They had specifically indicated an interest in making their own curtains and yet she had gone ahead and done this.

---

[26] Trudy is Jehovah's Witness and they are forbidden by their faith to participate in holiday celebrations such as Hallowe'en, Christmas, Easter and birthdays.

> I said to myself, well, I'll just do this over the holidays. Then I was sick so I just couldn't. I did some at home, but one can only do so much. (83.01.04)

She was feeling rather uncomfortable because she hadn't gotten it all set up the way she wanted. Even though she sensed they wished to be involved, "Maybe I've learned something through default. Maybe the kids want to be involved in creating their own environment," her need to have all the details worked out seemed greater. Prior to Christmas she had talked to the students about the kind of cartoon characters they liked.

> Over Christmas I made all these charts with Snoopy characters, laminated them, and put them up. That's where I'll put recipes and instructions for art and such. When the kids came in Monday they said, "Oh, you really must like Snoopy." I got the feeling it was ME that liked Snoopy, not them. (83.01.04)

Although Caroline was trying to be sensitive to, and involve the grade five students, she was having difficulty getting on the same wavelength. The students seemed enthusiastic about the various centres, so she went ahead and organized the class into three groups with each one spending a portion of the afternoon in either a creative writing, an art or a cooking centre. During any given week each student would be involved in each of the centres. This was giving the students an opportunity to work in small groups of three or four, but, as it still required them to do certain activities on specific days. They had little real control over what they were involved in.

Right after the holiday, Caroline was much more her happy, exuberant self, and feeling quite positive about her new grade five assignment.

> I really enjoy the older kids, but they're different from kindergarten kids.
>
> I'm glad I did (take it) in lots of ways. It's good to have the experience. It makes me feel less limited in terms of what I can do; and of course the extra money's great. (83.01.04)

Before Christmas she'd just been overwhelmed by her many responsibilities. Now she was recognizing the need to establish some realistic approach to them, but worried that she might neglect her kindergarten class.

> What I should be resolving to do is not spend all my time on grade five. I really love to learn, and there's so much I can learn about grade fives. I tend to get super enthused over something and spend all my time on that.... (83.01.04)

Caroline's outer confidence vanished a few minutes later as she shared her feeling of utter panic about coming back to school and facing "two grades, two different programs, decorating two rooms, two themes - actually three themes cause Thursdays we have theme day. I told my husband I just can't do it." Her husband and mother had bolstered her confidence and she'd come back determined "to be a brave little tin soldier, and carry on."

Getting Bogged Down

Caroline's enthusiasm to be back teaching, combined with her determination to "make it work", kept things moving along fairly smoothly for the first few days after the holidays.

By the second week, Caroline was doubting her ability to be a good teacher, and feeling very dissatisfied about what she was doing. After a reassuring discussion with the principal and an evaluation of her kindergarten program, things looked completely different. "I was ready to devote my life to teaching again." (83.01.14)

A few days later Caroline became ill again. When she returned to school she was feeling depressed with a low self-concept about herself as a grade five teacher. In speaking of the substitute teacher, she said, "He's very good. Probably a whole lot better in here than I am." (83.01.19) She still enjoyed her kindergarten class but really questioned why she had agreed to teach grade five.

> When I think about kindergarten I get this nice serene feeling, but if I think about grade five I get a tense, on-edge feeling - not knowing what's going to happen next. Maybe it was a dumb thing to get into, but now I'm in it. I don't have any option. (83.01.18)

Even though things weren't going well, Caroline would not consider letting down Betty, Ernie, the school, or the grade fives. She had taken on an assignment, and it was her duty to fulfill it. However, she was experiencing some guilt about why she had accepted the position.

> I keep asking, why am I here? One reason is to get my increment - with subbing and extra time I may get credit for one year. Also, the salary sure helps a lot, and then it's good experience to work with different age groups. (pause) When I honestly think about this, it's the money. It's a lousy reason to do anything. I'd teach kindergarten and they wouldn't even have to pay me for it, cause I like it so much. But, you'd sure have to pay me to teach grade five. (83.01.19)

She was also questioning her approach to grade five,

> I'm not even sure about the centre stuff. I thought they were so enthused about centres and having a chance to really get into art and writing and cooking. But I'm not so sure now. (83.01.19)

The next day Caroline talked to the grade fives about centres and found they actually preferred working together as one big group, with everyone doing the same thing at the same time.

> I guess I just assumed they'd want centres, but I met with so much resistance and hassels that I figured this can't be right.I wanted them to be involved in the decision-making process, but it was just a pain in the neck. (83.02.16)

Actually, Caroline involved them more in the decision-making process when she heard them out about why they'd rather not have centres, than she had during the centre times.

By February Caroline decided she should seek some help. She called the Language Arts Consultant, explained her situation, and asked if the consultant would come out and give her a hand.

> She was really helpful. She sent out some teachers' guides and reading series. She thought I might benefit more from visiting another teacher than having her come out, so I guess I can still call on her. (82.02.16)

Although it seemed to me this was a turning point in that Caroline must have said to herself, "I guess I'm not getting this sorted out by myself, so I better seek some assistance," she saw it more as just one additional step in coming to terms with grade five.

> I think I gradually tried things and changed them. I sort of threw myself into the deep end and tried to swim. Then I got to the point where I realized what I was lacking, and realized something needed to be done. Then I made contact with the Language Arts Consultant. Then I went to see how this other teacher was doing it. Then I came back feeling even *more* inadequate (laughed), but having something to go on, I guess.
>
> I had this prejudice against reading series and worksheets and all that other stuff, so I had to come to terms with myself and say "you've got to use these cause you just can't do it all yourself." (83.02.16)

Certainly Caroline had jumped right in without a lot of time to consider how she was going to approach grade five. This was very different from her entry into kindergarten, where she had planned and prepared for months in advance, in an area in which she had considerable experience and educational preparation. Her natural inclination was to organize the grade five learning environment in a way she was comfortable with and had worked well with kindergarten. She believed in focusing on the children and letting the curriculum evolve from their interests and needs. This requires a teacher to be very in touch with individual students and knowledgeable about appropriate expectations for the age group. Initially Caroline wasn't familiar enough with either, nor did she have the time, to really provide a rich experiential program for both her grade five and her kindergarten class. Then there was Theme Day every Thursday which required planning for a group of children from kindergarten through grade six.

> It's just *one more change* in a situation with too many changes in the first place. Like I change from kindergarten to grade fives to themes. There's just too much adjusting. It's more than I can handle. (83.02.16)

Caroline was really getting bogged down. In the fall she had felt working with mixed ages in themes was a good opportunity to get to know more children and reinforce a family spirit in the school. Now it was *just one more thing that had to be done.*

In retrospect, Caroline saw those first few months of searching for a workable teaching style with grade fives as one of the most unsatisfactory periods in her first year.

> When I first started with grade five I didn't know what to do. I was trying out other people's styles and ways of doing things because I didn't have enough confidence in my own. (83.06.22)

In February she had gone on an intervisitation to another grade five classroom that had been recommended as having "a very, very good teacher" so she could find out how to teach this grade of children. Instead of providing her with ideas and reassurances, it totally devastated her concept of how to interact with children.

> It ran like an assembly line - worksheets here, worksheets there. Finish this, finish that. Then more worksheets, and she had an overhead projector and they marked their own work while she went tick, tick, tick on the projector. Everything went whoosh, whoosh, whoosh and that's just not my style at all. I go in and we have a little chat and get comfortable and then we can embark on our projects and there's two people here working on that, and one person working on something else, and four people who are involved in such and such. We all just spread out and do our own thing at our own pace. It just wasn't the same at all (as the grade five class she'd visited). For awhile I just thought, "Oh my, I'm not doing grade five justice, because she (other teacher) said you've got to be teaching this skill, and oh, you couldn't possibly not be teaching handwriting and spelling every day..." (83.06.22)

Lacking confidence in her approach anyway, this exposure to an entirely different approach left her feeling "there must be something wrong with me and something wrong with the program and there will be something wrong with the children as a result." (83.06.22)

As Caroline became resigned to the fact that she couldn't handle things the way she wanted, her self-esteem seemed to crumble and her whole personality altered.

> I've changed a lot, but not in the right direction; not in a positive way at all. I've hardened up and become a lot more negative and really depressed. I'm not meeting my ideals and that sort of stuff... (83.02.16)

In the fall, Caroline had been bubbly and happy; full of ideas and aspirations to make education more appropriate for children. By February, her whole outlook on life had become very subdued.

> I feel rotten about myself - a lot these days. Nothing excites me any more ... I even hate to go to the staff room, cause I know people pick up on things like when you're not feeling yourself and you're depressed and irritable. I don't like people to see me that way. (83.02.16)

Caroline was experiencing considerable stress. Although Selye (1977) emphasizes the necessity of stress in life, he goes on to distinguish between pleasant stress - eustress - and the unhealthy kind - distress. Prolonged distress can lead to burnout and some of the manifestations as described by Veninga and Spradley (1981) are depleted energy reserves, lowered resistance to illness, increased dissatisfaction and pessimism, increased absenteeism and inefficiency at work, and a sense of isolation.

Clearly Caroline was experiencing all these manifestations. Would she be able to cope, or would she succumb to the pressures?

Off and Away

From April on, the year was filled with feelings of achievement and joy, interspersed with exhaustion and illness. In the middle of March Caroline missed four days of school, "I feel embarrassed that I let myself get so run down that I got sick. You really need to pace yourself and I don't seem to be able to do that." (83.03.24) However, March also heralded the beginning of happier times for Caroline. With the second formal evaluation of the year completed, she felt able to relax and be herself with her grade fives.

> After March there were going to be no more evaluations in grade five. That took a lot of pressure off. You can come in and evaluate me every day in kindergarten, but in grade five I didn't feel confident. Because I was so nervous I didn't teach the way I normally do. My voice was different, and I know my body language was very different. I know cause I could feel myself doing things I never do, like I never stand behind my desk... I didn't smile. It was awful. (83.06.22)

Even though the principal was not as positive as she had been with Caroline's kindergarten evaluations. "She never said I should change anything. She did give me a couple of suggestions, but I'm sure she didn't feel as positive about it because it was done in a very different way." (83.06.22) Although Caroline had not been happy with her performance when the principal had been in, she did feel that she couldn't be doing too badly or the principal wouldn't have nominated her for the Edwin Parr Award.

> I knew she couldn't nominate me for the award without taking grade five into account. I figured I must be keeping above the surface so I started to feel

> enough of a professional to relax and do things at my own pace and at the kids' own pace, so we'd just enjoy ourselves. (83.06.22)

With the pressure of evaluation off, and a sense of doing okay, even if not great, Caroline relaxed and began to enjoy her grade fives. She began to understand them and felt she was relating to them in a meaningful way. Initially Caroline had been intent on involving the students in making decisions regarding their program. When they resisted this role she changed her approach, gradually working out an arrangement that was comfortable for herself and her students.

> I really wanted them to feel it was their room and their program, and that they had a say in what happened. But at one point I just decided to heck with this, I'm just going to be traditional. This is my room, and this is my program,and you just like it or lump it. I couldn't stand all the static I was getting. Now I realize they had never learned how to function cooperatively in a group - they'd never had the opportunity to make choices so at first they were letting off a lot of their frustration. Now they're really involved and they give me lots of ideas. (83.06.22)

Through trial and error Caroline and her grade fives evolved a satisfactory mode of existence. Caroline no longer set up centres which the students rotated through, nor did she lecture or assign worksheets, rather they would start with a "gem of an idea" that might come from the students or might come from Caroline, and then different students would pick up on different aspects of the topic and work it through at their own rate. An interesting example is how they combined Caroline's love of literature and folk tales, and the students' current high interest in *Star Wars*.

> I've been reading folk tales to them and we started looking at how *Star Wars* is really a fairy tale. They got really interested in this and started writing their own books. Then I brought in a record. We listened to it, sang along, and a couple started writing more verses for it. For several days some continued to work on their scripts, some started illustrating their books, and a couple worked on their music and prepared to share it at Assembly. Others got into folk dances, while a few were sculpturing *Star Wars* characters. We were really integrating all the subjects I'm responsible for (Language Arts, Art, Music and Social Studies). (83.06.22)

Caroline and her students were jointly evolving a curriculum that excited them and caught their attention. Greene (1967) speaks of this shared experience.

> Somehow each person in a classroom must be enlisted and "stirred up" as a person engaged in an ongoing dialogue. The emphasis must be placed on what happens between those concerned with teaching and learning, on the kind of lesson "which develops in mutual surprises" rather than transmitting what the teacher has already "found". This means an emphasis upon the discoveries which take place through and by means of dialogue and shared endeavor. Only so can isolation be avoided in the busy, even the "ungraded", classroom; only so can the existing person be conceived as prior to the group. (p. 141)

When I inquired about how she handled Social Studies she replied,

> For Social Studies I rely a lot on their own backgrounds because I have a real range of cultures represented in my room. They bring things from home like food and we talk about how they prepare it, and we look for stories about their home country. I also do a lot of talking about the background of folk tales, like the country it originated in and we talk about things that are typical of that culture. Then we take a story that's basically the same but from a different country and look at the cultural differences. (83.06.22)

Caroline was happy with what she was doing and she felt the students were too. It was really important to Caroline that the students be happy. "My very first consideration is 'are they happy with themselves and their surroundings?'" (83.06.22) This was based very much on her own experience in school.

> I don't remember the days I learned how to spell certain words or to add or subtract... but I remember the days I felt good. I remember the days I felt special. I remember the teachers who shared something personal about themselves. I remember those days.
>
> The classes I did way the best in were the ones where my teacher really recognized me as being worthwhile. Those are the classes I did the most work in. I took the same classes over the years but it wasn't until I had Mrs. Tazan that I realized I could write. The minute she told me she thought I could write well, I started to write; not only at school. I wrote at home. I wrote all during the holidays. I shared my writing with other people. I was really interested in it. It was part of my self-concept. I felt good about my writing and I felt good about myself. That's my goal to make each child feel there's something special about them. (83.06.22)

For some of the students in Caroline's class there weren't many opportunities for them to feel special. One boy came to school all winter with only a light-weight denim jacket; one of the girls had only one pair of jeans and an old T-shirt she wore constantly; several came without breakfast. To Caroline each of these students was special and she related to them in what Buber (1965) would call an "I-Thou" relationship. Buber states "the interhuman relationship is unique; the participation of both partners is in principle indispensible." The overall meaning of these relationships is found in "what the persons mutually live together." Even though several of the grade five boys were considered to be "tough and hard to handle", Caroline didn't find that to be so. "My grade five boys are so nice. We really like each other and I know they feel special cause they make me feel so special." (83.06.22) Over the months a mutually satisfying relationship had developed between Caroline and each of her grade five students.

What About Next Year

All year Caroline had been anxious to get involved in a family grouping of K-1 or K-1-2. In the fall it looked as though she and the grade one/two teacher might combine their classes, but with Caroline taking over grade fives in December there was no more talk of a family-grouped primary for the current year. However, Caroline did not give up on the idea. At the January staff retreat for planning the coming year, she presented her case for putting the kindergarten-primary children together in a non-graded class so they could progress at their own rate. "It would be so much better for those children who need an extra year. Then they wouldn't have to fail a year." (82.11.05)

Although Caroline's assignment to grade five just prior to Christmas resulted in considerable anxiety as she strove to gain control of the situation, it is quite possible that it was the means of her being offered a continuous contract.[27] Initially only the six district nominees for the Edwin Parr Award were offered continuous contracts for the coming year. Had Caroline not been teaching full time, she would not have been eligible for a continuous contract.

As the year drew to a close, Caroline knew she would be teaching at Autumn Leaf the next year. She hoped it would be a kindergarten/grade one or kindergarten/one/two grouping, however, until registration numbers are confirmed in the fall the principal can make no guarantees.

D. PATTI

Becoming a Teacher

Teaching: A Life-Long Dream

"I've always wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember." (83.02.06) As Patti reflected, she'd had many experiences that influenced her becoming a teacher.

> I did a lot of babysitting - even overnight and with all ages of kids. I was saving money to buy a horse so I babysat every Friday and Saturday for

---

[27] "By putting together all Caroline's half-time days and subbing and then her full time teaching from December on, she had enough time to get credit for a full year of teaching." Principal (83.06.24)

years. (83.02.06)

Although her extensive babysitting was the means of fulfilling her strong desire to buy her own horse, Patti did enjoy being with children. Parents showed confidence in her ability by retaining her services over many years and even leaving their children in her care overnight. Friends and family felt she had a natural ability to relate well to children.

> Everybody was always saying, "You should be a teacher. You're so good with kids." I began to think I was destined to be a teacher.
>
> I always liked helping younger kids with homework. I used to play school with our friends' kids. (83.02.06)

Members of her family had been involved in education, so Patti had grown up seeing teaching as a desirable role to emulate.

> My Great Aunt Belle was really a terrific person. She was older, but told us some fascinating stories about teaching in the early days when they did enterprise. (83.02.06)

Although trained as a nurse, Patti's mother, an active community volunteer, spent more time in teaching situations than nursing.

> My mom was always working with kids in Brownies, preschool skating, Sunday School and as a kindergarten aide. I guess it just rubbed off on me. (83.02.06)

Patti's mother often involved her in these activities as a helper, so she had considerable first-hand experience in organizing activities, leading groups in songs, poems, action plays and collecting suitable ideas and materials. Even with all this involvement in teaching situations, Patti and her mom both attribute the determining factor in her choosing a career in education to an experience in grade six.

> I think the real clincher came in grade six when some of us were picked to go and help the grade ones with phonics. I just loved it! (83.02.06)

During high school Patti combined her love of horses and her interest in pedagogy by teaching riding lessons during the summers while working at the stables. For a while she even considered teaching riding as a career, but decided it was not economically feasible.

Generally, Patti enjoyed school. "Some of my teachers really impressed me. I remember my grade four teacher. She used to really make me feel good about myself." (83.02.06)

Although Patti had mostly positive memories of her teachers, she also had some very negative ones. "I hated kindergarten and grade three. I was so scared of the grade three teacher I'd cry every morning and lose my breakfast. She was always sending kids out into the hall for the whole morning. She didn't relate to kids at all." (83.02.06)

With the exception of grade three, Patti seems to have had a happy childhood filled with dancing, skating, music, Brownies, horseback riding, et cetera. Throughout school she was very involved in 4-H, focusing on public speaking and horsemanship. By high school, her interests had narrowed to "... horseback riding, babysitting (to pay for another new horse) and boys."

Patti's desire to work with children led her to enroll in the B.Ed. program at the University of Alberta, even though her high school guidance teacher discouraged "... going into Education because there won't be any jobs."

Just as Patti's earlier determination to get her horse had led to many weekends of babysitting and a curtailment of social life, her determination to go to University and become a teacher resulted in her throwing herself into her high school studies so she would be eligible for an Esso Scholarship. With considerable effort, and much parental encouragement, Patti obtained the 70% average required for the Imperial Oil Scholarship which guaranteed tuition for the duration of her University program.

In the words of Patti's mother, that first year at University was "a real struggle ... Living in residence is an important experience, but they sure don't settle in to do much work." (83.01.24)

Living in a University Residence holds many advantages for first-year students, but is not without its disadvantages. It provides an opportunity to socialize with students from varied backgrounds, pursuing widely divergent studies, but it also provides continuous distractions in the way of impromptu parties, discussions and activities. Although many first-year students really enjoy the social aspects of residence living, they readily acknowledge the many distractions. Some students can easily handle both the social aspect of University and their academic studies. However, for many the pursuit of academic knowledge suffers.

Although Patti's mother had some misgivings about the year, her brother did not.

> That first year she just felt she was there to keep the class average down. I must say, I wondered if I was doing the kid any favor by encouraging her to go to University, but her brother and her father insisted. Her (older) brother said, "Look, even if you lose your year, there's something I want you to understand besides Fort Saskatchewan." (83.01.24)

However, Patti's determination and effort, along with support from her family, resulted in a successful year and by her second year

> ... the ball just started to roll. Patti got involved with Cindy Cameron (an instructor in Movement). She became a great friend - more than just a teacher. She really helped her a lot. (83.01.24)

Patti agreed with her mother's view that Cindy Cameron had played a major role in her ultimate success at University. Cindy made the whole experience of University less impersonal; she took a personal interest in Patti.

> Cindy really got me started in movement. When I got an 8 in her course, she said she thought I needed to build up my confidence, so suggested I teach in the Saturday morning gym program for kids. At the time, I thought I was pretty self assured, but you know she was right. It gave me a lot of confidence and on the strength of that I applied for the Strathcona job. (83.02.06)

The "Strathcona job" became a two-year summer position with Parks and Recreation where she worked with three, four and five-year-olds throughout the County of Strathcona, moving from centre to centre, setting up activities, gym programs, crafts and snacks. The first summer she worked as one of the team teachers, but by the second summer she was given responsibility for hiring staff and organizing the entire program.

During her second, third and fourth years at University, Patti was involved in Saturday morning programs for young children. One term she worked in a creative dance program and for five terms in movement where she worked up from an instructor to coordinator of the Saturday morning gym program.

Her practical experience in the Saturday morning dance and movement programs, along with her summer jobs with Parks and Recreation, reinforced and supplemented her education program and student teaching. In considering the most beneficial aspects of her B.Ed. program, Patti rated the practical experiences with children highest, but also felt most of the education courses were useful too. "There were lots of education courses I wanted to take, but couldn't fit in." She also "... loved Children's Lit., Library Science and Movement courses, and got something out of child development and family courses," but couldn't see how some required options like Geography had helped her teaching in any way. (83.02.06) As she had tried to get Curriculum and Instruction courses in as many areas as possible, she graduated with "... only a minimum in language and reading. So this summer I'm going to take another reading course." (83.02.06)

Patti graduated with her B.Ed. in the spring of 1982, receiving the Pearl Turner Award[28] for showing greatest potential of the graduating class as an early childhood educator. Her parents were "... just thrilled to death, but her brother's the one that's proudest of all. They were always very close ... He went to *her* graduation but didn't bother going to his own." (83.01.24: Patti's Mom)

Patti's Beliefs About Education

Patti believes teachers are professionals, and being professional brings with it a number of responsibilities.

> First of all, you're responsible for what you do ... In teaching it's the hardest - if you're a professional engineer (as her Dad is) and build a bridge and it falls down, they're responsible for it. But they built it from the beginning, whereas with teaching, you take a child who's had five years of someone else building and all of a sudden we're responsible. Let's say in grade one that kid can't read - it's our fault, we're responsible. This is something I've been toying with for a while now. Yes, I know we're responsible for teaching them - but is it our fault if they don't learn? (83.02.28)

Combs, Avila, and Purkey (1973) in a discussion of the meaning of learning contend that the discovery of meaning can only take place when people actually become involved with the information being provided. If children lack the motivation to discover meaning, the information provided will not affect them and no learning will have occurred. "Students do not drop out because they weren't given information. They drop out because they never discovered what it all meant." (1973, p. 95) As teachers, we clearly have a responsibility to provide information in a manner that will interest and motivate our students. However, unless the student comes with some intention or desire to learn, it is clearly a futile endeavor.

Patti went on to say that "Professionals need some kind of special education in their area because they provide a service to the people - a special service that not just anyone can offer..." (83.02.28)

Faculties of Education across Canada agree that teachers need special education to prepare them for their roles. Unfortunately, there is little agreement as to what this special education should entail, hence a confusion in the public's mind about what specialized knowledge teachers have that everyone else does not.

---

[28] The Pearl Turner Award is granted to the fourth year student in Early Childhood Education at the University of Alberta who best reflects a set of criteria including sensitivity to and concern for children, achievement in the field and a zest for living. This will be expanded upon later in this chapter.

> If you're a professional, I think it should be reflected in the pay scale - sometimes I wonder if teaching is ... In most profesions you're rated according to the quality of how you do, whereas in teaching you get paid according to your years, which I think is really wrong.

Just recently President Reagan also made a statement supporting payment according to quality of teaching. "If we want to achieve excellence, we must reward it." (*Time*, June, 1983) Patti also felt "you should be given respect for your knowledge and training by the people around you." (83.02.28) Even though Patti felt teachers should be respected for their knowledge and training, she questioned the lack of concern parents seemed to have about what she was doing with their children.

> That's the thing that kills me. If a parent comes up and starts looking at something, I'll immediately start explaining and they'll say "Oh, isn't that neat," but they never question it. Why don't they ever ask why are you doing this? Is there any reason behind it? I wish they would. (83.02.28)

When talking about "her ideal teacher" Patti felt they should be:

> Someone who cares for children. You really have to care about what you're doing and want those children to succeed and do their best...

Joy, Caroline and Patti all have spoken of the need for a caring teacher, one who is really interested in what is happening for children. They could relate back to times in their lives when someone who took an interest in them as individuals, really made a difference in their own eagerness to learn. Patti went on to say a teacher should be "someone who believes in kids and they believe in her. Then it's an ideal situation ... they don't give up on any of the children. They keep working at it til they get it." (83.02.24)

She also saw the ideal teacher as "someone who has a lot of dedication and determination to make sure they're (the children) learning," yet someone who was "enthusiastic and could add a certain zip or zest to life and teaching." (83.02.24)

Patti shared her enthusiasm for life and learning with her children, and, at the same time, emitted a message that there was a task to be done, a lesson to be learned. She gave purpose to the children being there.

Patti felt educators should work together for the benefit of children. She was very open about sharing her ideas, expertise, materials and time with other teachers, and was dismayed by the attitude of some teachers, that their ideas were secrets to be guarded from all others. Early in January she had visited another school to share her pioneer unit and find out about these two kindergarten teachers' Valentine Celebration unit.

> I took my complete unit - songs, games, activities, books - I took copies of everything. Then, when I asked about their unit, they were rather vague. "Well we sang some Valentine songs ..." That didn't help me. I wanted to know *what* songs, which things worked, what didn't. It was as though they really didn't want to share anything. (83.01.12)

For Patti, her beliefs in early childhood education grew from exposure to ideas in courses, along with an opportunity to see them in practice. With her continuous involvement with young children throughout her B.Ed. program, she was able to try out ideas, reject and/or refine methods as she was developing her philosophy of education. This combined theory, observation and practical experience, seemed to have provided her with a strong belief in what she was doing, along with the assurance that it was feasible. In reflecting upon what she actually did in her classroom, Patti said:

> I was committed to what I believed was right for children and I was going to give what I'd learned at University of Alberta a try. I was lucky cause I'd seen teachers, in both my student teaching and my internship, who were working with centres. (83.02.24)

She knew other teachers could make a centre approach work, so she was confident that she could too. In addition she had received some theoretical background in desirable ways of working with young children, which provided her a rationale for what she was doing. "I feel that my Early Childhood Education courses - like 404[29] really helped a lot in giving me some sound things to build on - some sound ideas and beliefs." (83.02.24)

Her commitment to what she believed in gave her the strength to stand up for what she planned to do in her own classroom. However she acknowledges that she may have been a bit too idealistic.

> I think you tend to be too idealistic when you start - like when you're committed to your ideas. I think I wanted everything to be perfect... At first I wanted to change the world, but you soon realize that you can only do so much. (83.02.24)

Patti's belief about education were borne out in her behavior. The criteria used by the early childhood staff to select the recipient for the Pearl Turner Award portrays well the type of student/person Patti was:

- displays warmth, sensitivity and ability to interpret and respond to children's needs.

---

[29] Ed. C.I. 404. A full year course taken in the fourth year of the early childhood education specialization dealing with organization, environment, planning, along with integrating previous classwork into a workable plan for early childhood settings (K-3).

- displays professional curiosity and concern, and a willingness to learn about the field of early childhood.
- displays an effective level of achievement and success in the field.
- displays zest for living and a buoyancy of spirit, enthusiasm and a positive attitude towards others and the profession.
- displays a sense of the "fitness of things".

I Did It On My Own!

"I'm really thankful to have a job." (82.08.31) Not all of Patti's graduating class got jobs this year. Very few were hired on in the city school systems, and of those, many didn't get their first choice of grade level.

In January, Patti had applied to Lamont, County of Strathcona, and the Edmonton Public School Board. Her family lived in the County of Strathcona and Patti had worked for the county for two summers. The superintendent in Lamont was a family friend. A position in either of these areas would have enabled her to remain at her folks' acreage with easy access to her horse. However, in March she had her initial interview with Edmonton Public School Board and was offered a contract the following week. "I did it all on my own!" was Patti's jubilant response. In Edmonton, there was no doubt that she was hired on her own credentials, because she was an unknown to the hiring teams. Had she been offered a position with one of the other two boards, there would always have been a shadow of doubt in her mind whether it was really her qualifications that got her the job, or was it because her family was known and respected? As young people embark on their chosen careers, it is very important to many that they be allowed to do it themselves. There is an innate need to show the world, and in particular their parents, that they really can stand on their own two feet. Just as the young bird shows his independence by flying away from the family nest, so must young humans show their independence by launching themselves in a promising career. This does not take away from the gratitude and love these youths feel for their parents, but merely asserts that they "can do it on their own!"

Once Patti signed her contract with the Edmonton Public School Board, she was eligible for a one-month internship program in May. During her internship, she was encouraged by her principal to visit schools where there were known openings and "let them know she was interested in a kindergarten position." (82.08.31) After several interviews, Patti fell in love with a small inner city school that reminded her of her Aunt Belle Baker's school. Although she thought it would be great to teach in a small school, her parents and boyfriend were not pleased at the prospect of her living and working in an inner city area. Furthermore, the perceived benefits of teaching at this small school with one kindergarten class were overshadowed by the disadvantages of teaching a second kindergarten class in another school with another staff and community to get to know.

In the end, the offer of a full-time kindergarten at Alnwick won out and Patti had a job as of June, 1982.

Getting Started

Preparing for the First Week

Patti's enthusiasm about her new position was apparent when I first met with her a few days prior to school starting. She had been assigned a regular-sized classroom in one of the four room pods attached to the school, and had spent most of two weeks arranging and rearranging furniture in an effort to create just the right sort of atmosphere. Her classroom was bright and cheerful with dividers and shelves breaking up the available space into smaller areas. Large cartoon characters designated the major areas of the room; play house, blocks, painting, water, books and creative hands. Low mustard colored cupboards running along one wall provided easy access to materials for crafts and art activities. The beige walls were festooned with alphabet cards, and Big Bird juggling gigantic ice cream cones with each scoop displaying a child's name and birth date. A generous collection of blocks was neatly organized on shelves where patterns had been drawn to enable children to return them to the appropriate spot during clean up. Two large, low, round tables and a collection of small rectangular ones provided space for sit-down activities, with one area remaining clear of furnishings, designated as a group gathering place. Although two small windows provided little contact with the outdoors, colorful pictures and charts supplied lots of visual stimulation. Orange carpet covered about four fifths of the floor with the small linoleum area containing the sand, water and painting centres. A unique feature was a low walnut finished filing cabinet which was Patti's "shot in the arm file". It contained a wealth of "neat ideas" and jokes collected over the years that could be drawn upon to "pep up the day".

Patti had met with the other kindergarten teacher, Marj, at the school, who filled her in on the usual way things were done. They agreed to have a joint local advisory committee[30] and work cooperatively on many activities. However, right from the initial meeting there were some conflicting points of view held by the two teachers. Patti wanted to make home visits, but Marj did not believe in them. Patti planned to have "show and tell" but Marj claimed it was only "bring and brag" and she wasn't doing that. Marj wanted to tell the parents that their program was going to be craft-based, but Patti said, "No, that's not what mine is. I can't do a craft-based program ... I don't think the kids should have to do a craft every day..." Even though Patti felt "... it wouldn't be wise to rock the boat because I'm a new teacher here," she did have enough self-assurance to make a stand on several points. (82.08.31)

As the first day of school approached, Patti felt really comfortable with her room and her program, but did have a couple of concerns.

> This is probably silly, but you know what really worries me most? I'm afraid the parents will think I'm too young. I'm sure once they get to know me and see what I'm doing, they'll be happy with my program, but I'm worried about first impressions. (82.08.31)

Upon meeting Patti, I was struck with her exuberance for teaching and her self-assurance. Having worked for many years with fourth-year students of a similar age and appearance, her probable age had not made any impact on me. However, during the past two summers when Patti worked in preschool programs, parents had frequently asked her where the teacher was. Upon informing them that she was the teacher they reacted with surprise and often muttered something about mistaking her for the high school helper. Now that she was a "real" professional teacher, it was important to her that the parents recognize her as such. She didn't want to be dismissed as being "too young" before she'd had a chance to prove she really could do the job. Undoubtedly, neophytes are concerned about "looking appropriate for the job" whether this be in age, dress or manner. Patti also commented on how "dressed up" the parents were when they brought their children to school, and wondered if her casual dress would be acceptable. Patti was usually neatly attired in slacks and a blouse, or else in a casual, washable dress or skirt. "When you're sitting on the floor with kids, mixing paints and all those messy things, it just isn't worth wearing really good clothes that have to be drycleaned." (82.10.05) She hoped the parents would understand her practical approach to dressing.

---

[30] A requirement of all Early Childhood Services programs (kindergarten) is that they have a local advisory committee composed of parents and community services representatives, usually referred to as LAC.

Another concern Patti had was related to her being "the new teacher in the little room."

> The other thing is, the other kindergarten room[31] is so big and the other teacher's been here several years. The secretary told me some parents have requested their child go in the other kindergarten. I try not to take it personally, but I think they should give me a chance to prove myself. (82.08.31)

It made her sense of justice bristle to think that people were making decisions about which class they wanted their child in without even giving her a chance. Even though she knew it really wasn't a judgment against her, but rather going with what was familiar, she was very sensitive about being given a chance to prove herself.

Experiencing the Beginning

Tuesday, September 7, was registration day. This was the day parents and children came in to confirm their registrations, and pick up pertinent information about school policies and the kindergarten program. While parents read the materials and the children looked around the room, Patti sat down and chatted with each family about interests of, and concerns regarding, each child. Initially she began by asking parents about any concerns they had, but upon finding some parents uncomfortable talking about their concerns with their children present, she encouraged the children to explore the room while she chatted less formally with the parents. She reminded parents to label children's clothing and requested they bring a tote bag (for notes to go home), a paint shirt, and a recent photo.

For the remainder of the week the class was divided into groups of six or seven. Each small group attended one session, enabling them to get to know their teacher and feel comfortable with the room, as well as providing the teacher with an opportunity to get to know a few children each day.

---

[31] The other classroom had been specially designed for kindergarten, was twice as large as a regular classroom, had a loft, child-size washroom, stove, fridge, along with an abundant supply of blocks, games, sand table, et cetera.

Wednesday morning, Patti was in her classroom ready for her first real day of teaching. Her youthful exuberance bubbled over. Her face framed with long, dark brown hair, could barely contain the excited blue eyes and expressive mouth. "Am I ever excited. You may have to pull me off the ceiling." (82.09.08)

As the children arrived, Patti greeted each of them with an alligator name tag, helped them put their photo on the attendance chart and encouraged them to go and play. Then she gathered the six together and introduced her friendly puppet "Alfie", who chatted with the children about feeling a bit shy or afraid, rules and regulations, and the need for fire drills. After a practice fire drill and some more play activities, the children settled for storytime. After reading *The Gingerbread Man* Patti went on,

> Last night I was making some gingerbread men in the school kitchen, and they got away. What do you think could have happened to them? A child suggested, "They got lost." Yes, so let's look for them. (82.09.08)

Patti and her class looked all around the classroom. No gingerbread men! Then they checked different rooms in the school; the nurse's office, the bathrooms, the gym, the library, the main office and finally the principal's office, where he joined in the search chatting casually with the children. Upon opening a cupboard door, one of the children found a tray of gingerbread men which they excitedly took back to the clasroom where they decorated them with icing and raisins.

This activity informally provided the children with an orientation to the school, an opportunity to meet the nurse, librarian, and secretaries, as well as experience the principal as someone who is friendly and helpful. All this was accomplished in a game-like atmosphere in which the children were very involved.

After recess Patti took the children to each of the centres and talked about what could be done in each, as well as what limits there were when they chose to go to a particular centre. With only six children, she was able to interact with each child for a few minutes, clarify any questions or misunderstandings they might have regarding acceptable procedure and behavior in the classroom.

Following play time, the children went home and Patti readied the room for the afternoon group.

At noon as Patti and I were discussing how things had gone, a perplexed look came over her face and she said,

> I'm supposed to go out on supervision, and yet my kindergarten class will be arriving in a few minutes.[32] As if I didn't have enough to worry about without this. (82.09.08)

She decided to stay in her room to greet her new class. At that point there was no time to go to the office and check it out as a few children were starting to come in. All teachers are faced with numerous on-the-spot decisions to be made. For the beginning teacher these can be very disconcerting, particularly if they pertain to unfamiliar school policy.

Although the afternoon schedule was similar to the morning, Patti smiled more, seemed relaxed and more playful with the children in the afternoon group. (e.g. "Now where is that Mindy Brown? Did you ride your dinosaur today? et cetera) As they were reviewing routines, there was a knock on the door. The secretary came in with a new boy, his mother and baby brother. As the children gazed at the baby, Patti greeted Donnie, "Are you going to be in our classroom? I'll show you where to hang your coat." (82.09.13)

Monday, September 13, was the first day Patti had her total class together. As she was on supervision Monday morning and Wednesday afternoon, she had to be outside prior to school and come in with her class. When I arrived she was outside. "I'm on supervision this morning." (grimace on face) I asked, "Is there anything I can do?" and she replied, "Yes, sort out crayons into 17 piles ... and could you cut up the oranges for snack?" (82.09.13)

As Patti and the children (some with moms and/or dads) came in, Patti encouraged them to find their picture (for attendance) and their locker to put bags and jackets in and then find a centre to play in.

At the "lights out" signal children were questioned, "What does it mean when lights go off?" Clean up. "That's right, clean up and come over and find a place by me on the carpet." (82.09.13)

---

[32] School commences at 1:10 pm for grades one to seven, whereas the afternoon kindergarten class arrives at 12:50 so they can get in the required number of minutes by school closing at 3:30 pm.

Group time consisted of taking attendance, reviewing rules, calendar, some poems and action songs, and reviewing the various centres. Then each child was asked which centre they'd like to go to first and Patti recorded their choice. While the children played in the centres, Patti moved from area to area, talking with the children about what they were doing and reinforcing rules: "Put your paint shirt on before you paint, use your inside voices, don't climb on the furniture, put your hands up if you have a question." At one point she turned the lights off. "It's not clean up time. I just want to remind you to use your inside voices. It's so noisy in here." Later in the morning in a very businesslike voice, "There seems to be a big mess here. (in sand area) Can you boys start to sweep it up? Thank you." Later in the morning, the lights went off again. Carol (a child) in a loud voice, "Is it clean up time?" Patti, in a whisper, "Yes, it's clean up time and I need some help cleaning up the blocks." Although pleasant with the children, Patti portrayed a firm, no-nonsense attitude that the children seemed to respect.

As Patti returned from recess supervision the intercom intoned, "Miss Campbell, I need your forms." With an exasperated shrug Patti replied, "Yes, yes. They're coming. I was on supervision."

After struggling to get coats off and hung up, the children settled at tables for snack. Mr. Ayres arrived and greeted the children. Carol, "Are you the boss of this place?" He conceded he was, spoke to Patti for a few minutes, and left. Then Patti had a mother distribute sheets to each child and gave them a handful of crayons. "Now listen while I tell you what to do. Take your black crayon and put your name on. Put your finger on the mouse (repeated five times before everyone did it), put your crayons down (repeated four times) ...." This continued for another ten minutes and then Patti suddenly told them to leave their papers and come and make a circle around her. They sang some humorous action songs and just started reading a story when the intercom interrupted, "Excuse me, Miss Campbell. Did Darlene come today?"

The other kindergarten teacher had suggested the "crayon activity" as a good one for finding out if children know their colors. It seemed to be promoting a great deal of frustration and doubtful information about whether children knew their colors or were merely following their neighbors. As Patti recognized the futility of the activity she quickly changed to another more geared to the group. That afternoon she didn't use the "crayon activity". At noon, Patti exclaimed,

> I won't use that again. It may work for Marj, but not for me. I'm glad I've used it, but I certainly won't again. I could tell what colors most of them knew from watching them and talking to them. (82.09.08)

Initially, she had felt that she should try this because the "experienced" kindergarten teacher had found it useful. However, when she found the children experiencing frustration, she soon discontinued the activity. On a number of occasions, Patti was sensitive to the negative effect an activity was having on others and quickly changed it. Indeed, Patti seemed to display a sense of the "fitness of things"[33] in her relationships with students, parents and others.

As we have seen, the first few days were filled with many interruptions. Those that irritated Patti most were the impersonal requests/reminders over the intercom. They seemed to intrude in a way that the principal popping in, or the teacher across the hall requesting a pair of scissors, did not.

Reflections on the First Few Days

In reflecting on the first few days Patti commented on how pleased she was that she and Marj were sharing some responsibilities. Because of her background in Movement, Patti was going to take Marj's class with hers for gym, while Marj was going to book films, field trips, buses, et cetera, because she was familiar with the procedures. On the other hand she also voiced some concerns about the relationship. As they'd planned the first week Patti had shared her idea of having a "Gingerbread Search". Although Marj thought it was a great idea, at $1.09 each they seemed too expensive to buy for the whole class. Patti related

> On the weekend Mom and I made gingerbread men. We made enough for Marj too - as a thank you for all the help she'd given me. On Tuesday when I told her I had made them for her classes too, she said, "No thank you. I might use it another time."

Patti felt hurt, and wondered why "Marj wouldn't accept my offer of help." She also had a tinge of self doubt about the idea. "Perhaps it isn't a good idea." (82.09.08)

Although there were some things Patti was not willing to compromise on, she did try out some of Marj's activities. The color test was one she tried, but decided, "I'll not use that again. It may work for Marj but not for me." (82.09.13) "We've done some joint planning on our themes. We're starting with "All About Me" and then Marj's doing Nursery Rhymes, but I can't get excited about that ..."

---

[33] One of the criteria for the Pearl Turner Award.

She also spoke of her main focus for the first few weeks being rules and regulations.

> I must seem like an ogre the way I keep harping on rules, but I think they have to learn what's acceptable right off. I'm trying to be strict at first and then ease off. You can tell already the ones I'm going to have to be strict with. Like Carol, she's in another world - either pushing someone around or not listening. (82.09.08)

Having met the parents now, Patti expressed some new thoughts concerning them. "Some parents really make me uneasy and others I feel very comfortable with. I could feel it in the first three minutes." (82.09.08)

Patti felt a lot of time pressures those first few days. In relation to planning for the parent meeting "There's so much to do - phoning parents, getting forms distributed, writing letters to go home ... (82.09.13) The heavy emphasis on parent involvement in the kindergarten programs adds considerably to the normal beginning of school information that is usually transmitted to parents via newsletters, information sheets and notices. Patti and Marj were planning the first LAC meeting for September 14. In preparation, the executive and various committees had to be contacted, program expectations and plans had to be outlined, budget had to be considered along with a host of other details worked through.

Although she felt well prepared to start working with the children, there were so many other things to do. "Everything takes so much longer than you think it's going to. It took me two hours to go through the forms on the kids' likes, abilities ..." (82.09.13) Then, as if she didn't have enough to contend with, "I had to clean up the staff room all that first week of school." (82.09.13) Although Patti was willing to do her share, and realized there were many non-teaching responsibilities like supervision, staff meetings, letters to go home, et cetera, she did feel they might have given a new teacher a break on her very first week. Cleaning up the staff room or having supervision on the first day of school may not be disconcerting for the experienced teacher who is familiar with the routines and policies of the school but, for someone to whom everything is new and somewhat bewildering anyway, these mundane chores can be momentous.

There are so many school procedures to become acquainted with, like what to do when a five-year old is not collected after school.

> That mom didn't come to get her little boy til 12:20. There went my whole prep time. (11:20-11:50 each day). Marj just sits them out on the Lost and Found Box to wait for their mom. I'm going to do that too 'cause I'm just putting in time waiting for her (the mom). (82.09.13)

Marj's plan seemed to provide good clear guidelines, but as Patti thought about it she wasn't sure she could be so "cold-hearted about it. After all, it's rather scary to be in a big new school with no mom there to pick you up." (82.09.13) By the end of the month, this little boy hadn't been picked up until 12:10 on three occasions. Patti claimed it "had been worked out with the mom". Then she commented on her handling of these situations.

> I'm soft. Marj has more backbone. She just puts kids on the Lost and Found Box and leaves them. I keep going back and forth to check on them. She's built a backbone. I haven't yet. I keep thinking, "Oh, they're my children. I have to look after them ..." (82.09.29)

Patti wanted to handle situations efficiently, but she was torn between Marj's stoic efficiency and her own caring behavior.

Although Patti felt she never got as much accomplished as she had hoped to, she felt it was important not to let her professional life engulf her personal life.

> I feel I'm not doing enough. There are so many charts, games and teaching aids to make. It's interesting - it's fun - but one could work all the time. I'll work from early to late through the week, but I'm going to take the weekends off - at least Friday and Saturday - maybe I'll do a few things Sunday. (82.09.13)

Patti mentioned her determination to keep her weekends free several times in those first few days. It was as though she were trying to convince herself that it was a valid stand. Apparently she had always worked hard as a student and her part-time jobs had often taken up a major part of her weekends. Now that she was truly in the working field she felt she was entitled to some time off. "Everyone else takes weekends off, so why shouldn't I?" (82.09.13)

During the first few days Patti scarcely had time to get down to the staff room, but she did feel it was important to socialize.

> Friday night one of the teachers had a corn roast. I was scared but I went. I talk a lot when I know people but if I don't know people I'm really shy. I think it's important to get to know the other teachers as people, so figured I'd better try. (82.09.13)

She pushed herself to go because she believed teaching should be more than just working with children. There could be a pleasant colleagial aspect to it too. In summing up the first few days Patti said

> You're probably just getting all the negative things like "Oh that didn't work," but I'm really happy I've got this job. I like teaching even if I work from seven in the morning til late at night. I like it. I like my job. Like last Thursday (second day of school) I felt like I'd been teaching forever. I'm so lucky to wake up and really want to go to work. (82.09.13)

Patti was happily launched on her life-long dream. She had come to her kindergarten assignment with considerable experience with young children; her three years of work with the movement and dance classes during University, her summer experiences of organizing, teaching and directing preschool programs, and her student teaching and four-week internship in two kindergarten classes. These practical experiences helped her gain an understanding of children, develop a repertoire of appropriate activities and materials, and a confidence in her ability to work effectively with young children.

Throughout her B.Ed. program she had opportunities to implement new ideas and methods that she was being exposed to in her course work. As she not only thought and wrote about ways to work with children, but had actually tried them out, she had confidence that certain things worked for her and others would not. This gave her the self-assurance to stand up for what she wanted to do even though it sometimes opposed what the "experienced" kindergarten teacher wanted to do. Although she appreciated the assistance of the other kindergarten teacher and was anxious not to "rock the boat" she was also determined not to be compromised on her beliefs.

Having known her placement from the previous June, Patti had three months to prepare herself psychologically for this particular class. In mid-August she began to make physical preparations, arranging and rearranging her classroom several times until it finally "seemed right." Her centres were set up and she'd given considerable thought to how she'd involve the children in them. She'd met with the other kindergarten teacher and they'd done some long-range planning, so she not only knew what themes she was developing but had an opportunity to begin collecting materials and ideas for them. She was ready to begin.

When the children arrived, Patti was able to devote most of her attention to getting to know them. With staggered enrollment bringing in only a few at a time she soon knew some of their interests, abilities, particular needs and characteristics, as well as most of the parents.

During the first few days Patti seemed very comfortable with her program, the environment and in her interactions with the children. What did cause her some frustration were the numerous non-teaching activities like supervision, filling out forms, sending information home, being responsible for cleaning up the staff room and the many interruptions. There seemed to be so much to do and never enough time to do it. "Everything always takes longer than you think." (82.09.13)

Although she was pleasant with the children, she was very firm and did not hesitate to reprimand a child, even if his parents were there. She knew what she wanted to achieve and used imaginative, child-appropriate activities to do so like the day she oriented the children to the school by having them hunt for gingerbread men.

Characteristics that came through in a variety of situations were Patti's adaptability, sensitivity, determination, and sense of *joi de vivre*!

Experiencing Alnwick Community and School

"I couldn't believe how far out you were. I kept driving and driving." This is a fairly typical comment of the first time visitor to Alnwick Community School.

The community Alnwick serves is characterized by "an ever increasing wider range of clientele. Some youngsters enjoy a rich cultural background, while others have only the bare physical necessities of life." (School Budget Document, p. 8)

Patti's class was a cultural mosaic with children from India, China, Spain, Czechoslovakia and Greece. Initially she experienced some difficulty pronouncing the various ethnic names, but as the year progressed she came to really value to multi-ethnic quality of her classes. "They're such an interesting group of kids. They've had so many different experiences and so much to offer and the parents really seem to value education." (83.06.28)

The principal defines "community schools" as more than a building available for community use. He sees its strength in "the school being of service to the community and the community being of service to the school." This seems borne out in practice, for parents are very supportive of the school with many volunteering to work in classrooms and the library, prepare instructional materials, and help out with special activities and events (field trips, baking for school functions, et cetera). A community school coordinator arranges for community resource people to be involved in the school program, as well as arranges for a wide range of courses to be offered for community residents (oil painting, Scouts, archery, gym, pottery for children, et cetera). During the fall Patti was vaguely aware that there was "always something going on" in the school, but it wasn't until after Christmas that she took advantage of the opportunities when she and her boyfriend signed up for dance classes. As there were no movement classes for young children offered, she felt this was an area she would like to get involved in for the next year.

The following objectives for community education are outlined in the school budget document.

> a. To develop community related curriculum to enhance recreational, educational and cultural strengths of Provincial Curriculum.
> b. To maintain and promote the role of the volunteer within the school.
> c. To develop a strong parent and teacher interaction.
> d. To effect the educational advancement of each resident in a teaching-learning environment.
> e. Promote interagency cooperation at a district level.
> f. Aid the school in modifying the existing facility as need arises.
> g. Encourage community use of school facility and school use of community facilities.
> h. To develop an awareness of community issues and needs so as to formulate a process by which these needs/issues may be addressed.
>
> (p. 24)

The school is almost in constant use with facilities being utilized to capacity for daytime, after school, evening and weekend programs. As a community school, Alnwick houses a half-time community-school co-ordinator through a Provincial Grant. Also housed in Alnwick Community School is the District Parks and Recreation Co-ordinator for Area One. The school really seems to be the focus of community activities and there is a constant flow of residents in and out of the school.

In its fourth year of operation, Alnwick incorporates new design features:

> Alnwick has a Learning Resource Centre surrounded by nine classrooms, an ECS room, music/drama room, and an arts/science room as well as a gymnasium. Two free-standing portables were added in December, 1980 and two four-classroom pods were added an in operation for September, 1981. (p. 11)

Patti was assigned a room in one of the four-classroom pods. Although joined to the main part of the school, it was quite a distance from the other kindergarten and grade one classes. Patti sometimes wondered if her grade three and four neighbors were bothered by the activity and noise of her kindergarten, but the main drawback was a lack of water source within the room.

Considered an elementary school, Alnwick accommodates students from K-VII, with classes organized heterogeneously. The school operates on a generalist philosophy with most teachers responsible for all subject areas with their own class. "An exception to this is the music program, which operates under the excellent direction of our music specialist." (p. 11)

There were twenty-five full time teachers; two kindergarten, four grade one, three grade two, three, four and five classes, two grade sixes and one grade seven, with a librarian, a music teacher, a counsellor/resource teacher, and a teaching vice-principal. Two of these were first year teachers, two others were new to the school, while a handful had come with the principal four years earlier when he opened the school.

When I asked the principal about school philosophy, he provided the following statement:

> Philosophy in a Nutshell:
>
> The Alnwick Community School program blends the best features of various approaches into a single comprehensive integrated system to meet the needs of children with varying tastes, interests, speeds, and abilities; a program in which students happily participate in learning.
>
> We try to present pupils with a challenge to enable them to work to potential, we try to build students' self-confidence and we are concerned about the way in which students react and relate to each other and their teachers. In short, academic, social, psychological, and physical development fall within our realm of responsibility. (p. 12)

In discussing needs of the children in this community, the principal voiced concern over "an increasing number of our children suffer because of broken homes, language problems, lack of funds and lack of physical stability."

Although the economic recession is causing considerable unemployment in the district, "In the last two weeks lots of kids have come to me in tears saying their mom or dad have lost their jobs." Mr. Ayres feels there might be some benefits with "Dads going back for job retraining, hence raising the standing of living; more moms staying home with their children; and perhaps even more moms available to help in the school." (82.12.13)

A major concern expressed by Mr. Ayres was the large number of "latchkey kids going home to locked houses" at lunch time and after school. He cited an example of "one six-year-old boy who goes home every day to prepare his own lunch of either soup or weiners." He rather sadly concluded that even though he felt the school must be concerned with these matters, this concern was not necessarily shared by the trustees or even many of his own staff.

With many mothers working, several of Patti's children attended kindergarten for two and a half hours and spent the remainder of the day in a day-care setting. By the second week Patti commented, "You can sure tell the day-care kids. They spend so much time away from home. Many of these kids just don't have enough quality time with their moms and dads." (82.09.08) Many children in day care have spent two or more years in group settings before they arrive in kindergarten. One might expect this experience would enable them to move into the group setting of a kindergarten more easily. On the other hand, they may be expressing some frustration at being "contained" in an adult structured world for much of their lives. In discussing the natural world of children, Val Suransky states

> The child lives in open communion with the world, and the world, in turn, invites exploration from the child ...
>
> The child becomes herself through play ...
>
> They are in the world; they act upon the world; they discover things in the world; and in so doing and acting, they are fulfilling a fundamental human activity of intentionality and purposiveness. (1982: 172,173)

Suransky sees much of "early schooling", especially where children are in institutional settings for long periods of time, as in day care, as thwarting the child's natural way of being in the world. They are "socialized into institutional time", they are denied the "freedom to play or work" in meaningful ways, they become product oriented rather than valuing the process. She worries what long-term effects this may have on large numbers of children who are entering structured programs at a very early age.

> Children were not free to create their own landscape; to significantly imprint their mark upon the environment. They were denied their own history-making power, which as becoming beings is an existentially vital theme. (1982:176)

Perhaps what Patti experienced as setting the "day care kids" apart, was that from a very young age they had been denied the freedom to be themselves, to explore the world on their own terms. They had not had the opportunity to really "become at home in the world". (Vandenberg, 1971:63)..

Becoming Established

Experiencing Relationships

Relationships with Children

Initially Patti had planned to do home visits as a way of getting to know individual children and their families before school started in September. However, the other kindergarten teacher "didn't believe in them" so Patti decided she'd better not "rock the boat". On registration day Patti met most of children and many of their parents. This enabled her to get some information on the the children's interests, concerns and expected behavior. She immediately put their interests into use in designing name tags for lockers, in which she tried to match pictures of each child's interest with their name (e.g. Bora - dinosaur).

With only six or seven children coming each half day for the first week, Patti was able to discover informally which children could print their names, knew the colors, related well to other children, were timid and so forth. She set up a file for each child which became the basis of her record keeping for the year.

One of her many objectives for the first couple of weeks was to focus on rules and regulations. Patti found her morning class of seventeen (9 boys, 8 girls) and her afternoon class of fourteen (6 boys, 8 girls) very different.

> My morning class is so noisy and there are two ESL[34] children. In the afternoon they're so much quieter. Don't you notice a big difference? Aren't they a different group? (82.09.13)

---

[34] ESL refers to English as a Second Language. Often these children speak very limited, if any, English when they begin school in the fall.

Later in the day she commented, "Oh, I love my afternoon class. They're my dream boats. I love my morning class too, but they're much harder to manage."

In a casual chat with the principal, he too commented on the differences in Patti's classes. "Did you notice the difference between the classes? We put all the 'groaners' in the morning. Patti doesn't know that yet." (82.09.13) He indicated that he had purposely put the difficult children in the morning class. because "most people are better able to cope with problematic situations in the morning." While Patti's initial reaction to her classes was to prefer the group that was quieter and readily conformed to her rules and regulations, as the year progressed, she came to value the assertiveness and diversity of the morning group. She found them more challenging, but in many ways they were also more interesting and rewarding.

According to the Rosenthal study (1968) it has been shown that children often live "up to" or "down to" teacher's expectations. Patti never thought of her morning class as "groaners", but rather as a lively group requiring firm control. In fact, it was impossible to determine whether all the difference in the classes was due to the children, or because Patti was a bit more uptight in the morning as it was the first time to try everything out - stories, new activities, art projects, new routines. Patti's manner was firm and business-like, especially in the morning class. In the afternoon she smiled, joked and laughed more with the class. When asked if her different behavior could be attributed to her being more relaxed, she replied, "If I were more that way in the morning they would take advantage of it and think 'Oh, she's easy'."

Still reflecting on the differences in her classes, she commented on how individual children reacted differently to her "Thinking Corner."[35]

> In the morning after Don had been there for a while and I asked if he was ready to come and join us he retorted, "No." (His mother said he's sensitive and sulky.) Whereas, in the afternoon, when John hit that other child and I sent him to the corner he looked unhappy about leaving the group and was anxious to join the group when three minutes were up. (83.09.13)

---

[35] The Thinking Corner was a semi-isolated area where children were asked to go for two or three minutes to consider their behavior when a couple of warnings had not effectively curtailed unacceptable behavior.

Patti also found a difference in the classes' readiness to move into new activities. The afternoon children seemed more mature and ready to get involved in "academic" activities like printing names, words and number activities. During the fall the morning class remained more interested in playing in the "less academic" centres of blocks, house and painting. However, later in the year Patti began to value the diversity of the morning class. "You pick up on what they're doing and their enthusiasm, and it gets you going." (83.02.17)

To Patti, these were "her children" and she took a genuine interest in their joys and their sorrows. At the beginning of each day, Patti greeted each child individually with a comment directed at making the child feel special. For example, "Good afternoon, Celina. I like to see you stand so nice and tall. What color dress does she have on today?" (82.09.22) "Good morning, Barry. We missed you yesterday. Are you feeling better today?" (82.10.09) Individual greetings were followed by "show and tell" with a difference. One of the children would come to sit beside Patti and give a clue as to what "treasure" he had concealed in his bag, and then solicit answers from classmates who had their hands up. A typical example:

> Jason: "It lived a long time ago, but it's not living now."
> Heather: "A dinosaur."
> Jason: "You're right!"
> Heather: "I could tell by the long ago." (82.09.22)

As the year progressed all the children improved at both giving appropriate clues and using the clues to guess what was in the bag. With only two children a day, and the focus on mystery, clues and discovery, this was an exciting ritual that never degenerated into "bring and brag" as often happens when unlimited children are allowed to bring an(y) object to merely hold up for viewing.

Patti insisted on strict adherence to routines and rules, but always ensured children knew why certain behavior was or was not acceptable. After centre time one day, she commented that they needed to review rules for the sand area. When a child offered "No throwing of sand," Patti acknowledged it and asked, "Why not?" Suggestions included, "It might get in someone's eyes," and "It will get on the floor." The children had quickly learned what was acceptable behavior and there were few transgressions. If rules were broken, Patti spoke quietly to the individual(s). If it continued they were sent to the "thinking corner" to consider why it was unacceptable.

Activities often held an aura of discovery or excitement. When the theme was colors, each day brought a visit to the magic pot where one child got to drop some food coloring in while another stirred up red or yellow or purple! After a variety of experiences with "colors", the unit was culminated with making rainbow cookies out of colored dough.

At the end of September, the principal had his first "pit stop"[36] with Patti. Much of the discussion centered on Patti's understanding individual children.

> Mr. A.: What about Serena?
> C.: What do you want to know?
> Mr. A.: Just your feelings about her. Anything important.
> C.: Well, she's very bright and is needing some extra work.
> Mr. A.: Barry.
> C.: He seeks attention. His parents are separated.
> Mr. A.: Jane.
> C.: She doesn't seem to fit with the morning class. I'd like to see her move to the afternoon. I think there'd be more challenge.
> Mr. A.: I'll approach her parents if you'd like.

Patti shared two or three items about each child, with Mr. Ayres making notes in his files. When they had reviewed each child, Mr. Ayres commented, "You seem to have a very positive attitude about each child yet." (82.09.29)

Patti retained her positive attitude about each child throughout the year. Some children were more troublesome than others; but they were all special. Many of her high points during the year were related to special achievements and activities of the children. In December she enthusiastically related

> The most rewarding thing has been to see how the kids have grown and changed. When I think of what they were like at the beginning of the year, and what they're like now - they've come so far. Like their attention span ... they've learned so much; Bob has learned to write his name, Don can stand up and talk ... I've become so attached to them. They like school now. They're really excited about it. At the first of the year they came cause they were supposed to - now they come charging in the door all excited. (82.12.01)

One day Patti and I were discussing some of the rewarding moments, and frustrations, of working with young children. She shared the following conversation.

---

[36] The principal has four "pit stops" with each teacher during the year. He feels this keeps him in touch with what's happening and enables the teachers to share concerns, aspirations, and highlights with him.

> This past week they've become very concerned about why I don't wear any rings. One child said, "She can't wear rings cause she isn't married." Another queried, "Why don't you have any kids?" Children's replies: "She's too young to have kids. She needs a daddy first. My uncle isn't married either." (82.11.19)

The children were interested in Patti as a person, as well as a teacher. They felt comfortable with her, yet respected her, and her expectations for them. "At first I was worried I was being too strict with them, but now I'm really seeing it paid off." (82.10.11) At the beginning of the year she had been concerned the children might see her as "too tough" but as the year progressed she felt her classroom was running smoothly and the children were enjoying kindergarten and being with her.

There were frustrating times too. Near the beginning of term, Patti introduced a good morning song sung to the tune of *Happy Birthday*. Immediately a child's voice shrilled out, "Don't sing that song. Jehovah's going to come down and strike you dead." Somewhat startled, Patti realized the child must be Jehovah's Witness, so arranged a meeting with the parents because, "I don't want to go against the teachings of the parents." However, even the parents weren't agreed on what policy Patti should follow. The mother said Mark should leave the room when holiday activities were going on (e.g. making pumpkin faces, Christmas wreaths, birthday celebrations), but his father said, "No, he should stay in the room and just not participate in the activity." Patti faced a dilemma. "So what do I do if he wants to make a pumpkin face? I don't think *I* should have to be the big meany and say no. I think the parents should." (82.10.18) The parents suggested she provide alternative activities for him. "Can you see me saying to Mark at Christmas, 'You can't do this or that or this,' when all the kids are so excited about doing Christmasy things?" (82.09.22)

As more and more children from different cultural and religious backgrounds attend our schools, more teachers will face these questions. What if individual rights and beliefs begin to conflict with the everyday practices in the classroom? This whole area needs to be explored further. How best can teachers develop respect and understanding of these differences?

Relationships with the "Other" Kindergarten Teacher

Before school started, Patti had met with the other kindergarten teacher, Marj, to find out about the general procedures for kindergarten at Alnwick. Patti appreciated the time Marj spent with her and saw many advantages to having an experienced teacher working at the same grade level. Although Marj knew all the procedures for ordering films and arranging field trips, she didn't feel gym was really her thing. Patti had an extensive background in gym, so this gave her an opportunity to reciprocate by taking both classes for gym. As described earlier, Patti had tried to show her appreciation for Marj's help by preparing gingerbread men for her class, and was bitterly hurt when Marj failed to accept her overture of gratitude.

As they started to do long-range plans and discuss what to share with the parents at the LAC meeting, it became obvious that their approaches were quite different. On some matters they compromised, on others each chose to each do her own thing, while on others Patti felt it was prudent to go along with Marj's way. "I don't feel it's wise to rock the boat. Perhaps we'll get less flack from the parents if we do the same things." (82.08.31) As she faced this unfamiliar frontier, abounding with parents, she seemed to feel "united we stand, divided we fall." Patti had accepted Marj's offer to chair the first parent meeting. However, during the meeting she had some regrets. "This doesn't make me look too good. It looks like she knows it all and I don't know anything. But that doesn't really bother me because she's chairing it and that's fine." But it did bother Patti when she wanted to say a few words to the parents and was denied the opportunity.

> Near the end, I said, "Well, I'd like to say something," and she said, "No, there isn't time." I wanted to say thanks for coming out and tell them I didn't have any children so these are mine. You know, to kind of conclude the whole thing rather than just ending it the way it did. (82.09.29)

Patti's disappointment with how the meeting had gone merely made her a little more determined that next year it would be different. Next year she wouldn't be "the new teacher" and she'd have a lot more say in how things went. She had lots of ideas she wanted to try out.

> Next year I'll do it differently. You know that *Spice*[37] slide presentation? I'd like to use that with new parents ... if they know more about what's happening they can share it with their kids .... I'd like to have a session on, "What do you think your children can learn from blocks?" ... more hands-on things. (82.09.29)

Her enthusiasm for all the things she wanted to try out was somewhat tempered by Marj's paced approach. A person new to a situation often brings an exuberance to the task that the more experienced worker may both envy and find somewhat threatening.

Patti recognized it would be easier to try out her ideas if she were the only teacher, and yet there were advantages to working with another person.

> There are a lot of things I'd do differently if I were the only one in school. There are advantages to being the only one in the school because what you do is your ship and there are no questions like why don't you do it like Mrs. Jones. But at the same time there are real advantages in that we share files and we share the workload. That's been good.(82.09.29)

A few days later when Patti expressed some concern over how crowded her room seemed, Marj suggested removing some of the furniture. "It is a lot better. There's more room to move around and it's easier to supervise." (82.10.18) Patti found one of the advantages of having an experienced colleague on hand was to provide on-the-spot advice. Although they were involved in many joint activities - field trips, the barn raising evening, an outdoor weiner roast, and the Christmas concert - they did not have a harmonious relationship. "If we were not teaching together we really have nothing in common. Our belief system, our interests, our personalities, are entirely different." (82.11.19)

After Christmas when Patti shared her idea of having a special Valentine's Night for the parents, Marj responded, "I think we'll do our own thing. By the way, now that you're here, I think I'll take my kids into the gym by myself." Patti's first thought was,"Am I hard to work with?", but she'd had no trouble working with the grade one teacher on their joint Christmas theme. Actually she felt it might be best. "This way she'll (Marj) do her own thing and I'll do mine. I think it will be better. I don't know. We just don't seem to communicate." (83.01.12)

---

[37] A slide presentation prepared by Early Childhood Services to describe important aspects of a young child's growth and development (S - social, P - physical, I - intellectual, C - creative, E - emotional).

At University, students are exposed to many belief systems and approaches to working with children. Some they may accept; some they may reject. However, once they become part of a staff, they no longer have the luxury of merely accepting or rejecting various philosophies. They must learn to work side by side, or even as a partner, with someone who may oppose everything they believe in. If a student is not firmly committed to particular beliefs, or cannot articulate a sound rationale for them, they may soon find themselves being swept along with someone else's approach. Under these circumstances, Marj, the experienced teacher, might easily have taken charge and steered the new teacher along her path. This did not happen with Patti. She held definite beliefs about what was appropriate for young children and she was both determined and articulate enough to stand by them firmly. Although there was some attempt to compromise and work together, eventually both teachers seemed to accept that it would be best if they "agreed to disagree". The remainder of the year ran much more smoothly when they both accepted that each should go her own way.

Relationships with Parents

Patti looked forward to meeting the parents and sharing their children's progress and problems with them. Right from her first encounter she showed sensitivity to the parents' concerns and aspirations for their children. She soon sensed that she was more comfortable with some parents than others. She also began to recognize individual differences among them, as well as their children. "Jerry's mom is really trying to push him. I'd rather not have Donnie's mom helping in the classroom, because she does everything for him. One mom brought in some posters for the kids. Another has offered to make some charts. She's an artist so they should be really nice." She was somewhat taken back that some parents assume teachers are available for a variety of non-teaching tasks.

> Mom: "Isn't there going to be a bus to pick up the children? Isn't that your job?"
> Patti: "No, that's not my job."
> Another Mom: "How late do you stay?"
> Patti (thinking she wanted to talk to me about the child): "Well, I usually stay quite late."
> Mom: "How late?"

> Patti: "Usually til 7 or 8. On Fridays I leave at 4:00 or 4:30."
> Mom: "Oh good. I've got a doctor's appointment and I want to do some shopping so I won't be back until four!"
> Patti: "Well, our policy is that if parents aren't here at 3:30 we have the child sit on the Lost and Found Box until they're picked up. *I will be in my room* if something happens..."
> She was here at 3:30. She got the message, but you really have to watch or they'll take advantage of you. They seem to have diffrent values and think it's part of your job. (82.09.29)

Patti was prepared to work hard at her job, but she did resent the assumption that kindergarten teachers were really just glorified babysitters. "I don't think a lot of the parents consider kindergarten as important as grade one. In response to, 'What do you want for your child this year?' many of them say, 'Oh, to have fun'." She wanted them to understand there was more to kindergarten than having fun. "I think as the year goes on they'll appreciate more and more as they see their child grow and change." (82.09.29) There were a number of ways she shared what was happening with the parents. Patti was readily available to parents if they wanted to discuss any aspect of their child's program. If she had a concern she readily contacted the parent by phone. Outside her door she had a bulletin board where she posted notices, poems, interesting articles, sign up sheets for volunteers and so forth. Special letters were sent out whenever there was pertinent information to be shared with all. Patti and the other kindergarten teacher arranged a parent meeting early in the fall to provide general information about their program, parent involvement, field trips, snacks, and goals.

In late November, the kindergarten classes invited their parents to a "Barn Raising Bee" as the culmination of a pioneer unit. This was to provide "a special activity for the children to share with their parents." A few exerpts from the account I had written of the occasion will give some idea of the children's and parents' involvement.

> ... the boys and their dads raised construction paper logs to the frame on the far wall (of the gym). A great applause arose as they finally completed the log barn to the accompaniment of old-time fiddle music and clapping.
>
> ... eighty little folks energetically doing the boogey. Then they formed two large circles to dance *Turkey in the Straw* and the Pau Pau dance.... To ensure all a chance to get involved in the gaity, the children invited their parents to do the bird dance. As young and old alike joined in, it resembled an old country hoedown.
>
> ... large sheets of white paper were removed from several tables to

> reveal kindergarten made muffins, butter, apple sauce and pumpkin tarts ...
>
> as parents departed with their offspring, a glow of pride shone in their eyes. The two teachers looked weary but pleased. A fun evening for all! (82.11.25: field notes)

While the evening showed the parents what the children could do, it also involved the parents in a shared experience with their children so they could experience the excitement and sense of pride their children had. Patti had used a similar unit and barn raising in one of her summer programs, so had some idea how much the children might enjoy it, but the adulation from parents and other teachers made her feel just great. "You have such neat ideas, Patti, what would you suggest..."

> I think those are the kinds of things that let you know you're doing all right in your first year. (82.12.01)

While the kindergarten mandate[33] is to have parent involvement in the program, Patti interpreted this broadly to provide for individual parents' preferences. On her bulletin board she had a sheet encouraging people to indicate how they would like to be involved: with their own child? with the total class? at home preparing activities? Although she was hoping to have some parents working with her in the classroom, only six signed up for November. She realized leaving it wide open was not working, so she decided to set up a roster for January.

> I'm just going to say, "Look, I need more help." Actually, I think I'll have the phoning committee approach them (the moms). It's easier for them to say, "Oh, she really needs the help. I think we should help her," than for me to say it. (82.12.01)

Patti rationalized that if the parents helped her prepare materials and interact with individual children that it would be a better program for all the children. On one hand, Patti wanted parents involved "because there were so many things to be done," but on the other hand, it was a lot of work getting ready to involve them, "you have to prepare samples of what you want them to make, and then you have to put up with stuff that's not exactly the way you wanted." (83.01.12) This is a predicament in which many people find themselves when they first attempt to delegate responsibility.

---

[33] In the Operational Plans for Early Childhood Services (1973) handbook the following statement is made:
"The main purpose of Early Childhood Services (ECS) is to strengthen the sense of dignity and self-worth within the young child and his family."(p. 3) One of the ways this could be achieved was to "encourage and maximize the involvement of parents and the community." (p. 1) This was frequently interpreted as parent involvement in the ECS (kindergarten) classroom.

Patti viewed "parent involvement" very much as ways the parents could help make the program better, thus providing a better experience for their children. While she was sensitive to the fact that not all parents could, nor wanted to be involved directly with the children in the classroom, she gave little thought to how the parents' involvement was actually "strengthening the sense of dignity and self-worth of the young child and his family." (ECS, 1973, p. 3)

One of the long-established means a school has of sharing information about children with parents is report cards. The first reporting period was early November. The kindergarten teachers were not providing a written report for parents, but rather inviting all parents to come for interviews. These were scheduled for noon, after school, and evenings, and ranged from fifteen minutes to an hour. Patti prepared a page of comments on each child which she read to the parents, and a cue card noting special things she wanted to mention.

> I always tried to start with positive comments and stress that I was focusing on social aspects and how the child had settled in. I found in a few sensitive situations it worked better if I just talked to them and didn't have anything written down. I told them to ask if they had any questions or comments as I went along. (82.11.19)

By the Friday of reporting week, Patti's eyes were red and bloodshot and she was exhausted, but feeling good about how the interviews had gone. Having actually thought through and written down her comments gave her confidence that she had some pertinent information to share with the parents. She had spent a lot of time preparing for them and felt most of the parents realized, and appreciated, the amount of effort she'd put into it.

For the second reporting period in February, she followed much the same procedure of preparing written comments and a cue card, but this time also included a written report card for the parents, along with samples of children's work.

> It really takes a long time to do all this, but I want the parents to see what's going on. It really gave me confidence knowing that I had the written comments there if I needed them - but I didn't. (83.02.06)

Patti felt that being thoroughly prepared for the conferences helped her relax and be more sensitive to the parents' reactions.

> ... especially with the weaker students, I could feel them (parents) out, watch for expressions and see how it was going. If I was reading it (the comments) I'd almost have to finish it. (83.02.06)

She felt her efforts were worthwhile when several parents commented on "how thorough" she'd been.

Relationships with Others

People who think "liking to work with little children" is enough qualification to teach kindergarten, would have been amazed at the extensive interaction Patti had with older students and adults throughout her first year. At the preschool staff meeting, Patti volunteered to work with school patrols. She recalled her years as a school patrol and the pride she had taken in "helping students cross busy streets safely ... in all kinds of weather, sunny or rainy or below zero ..."[39] She felt this was an extra school activity she would like to be involved in. By November she commented, "My school patrols are driving me crazy, but I'll likely take them next year." Although she sometimes wondered why she'd taken on patrols, she realized, "I'm the kind of person who isn't happy unless I get my feet wet." (82.11.03) A couple of weeks later at a patrol meeting, Patti tried to impress upon the group that they had to take some responsibility for their behavior, and for the equipment.

> Look, we started with seven sets of equipment and now we only have three. What's happened to them?
> I've let you pick your own partners. Now it's up to you to prove to me you can work together. (82.11.19)

Patti couldn't believe how irresponsibly they acted. "When I was a patrol, it was an honor and you really took it seriously. With these kids it seems to be something to do if you feel like it." (82.11.19)

By December Patti was really depressed by the lack of cooperation and commitment shown by many of the patrols. The vice-principal suggested she drop those who failed to attend meetings and were not fulfilling their roles. When I asked if his suggestion seemed helpful, she replied,

---

[39] Taken from an essay written by Patti in grade six "My Responsibilities as a Patrol Member".

> Yeah, but he's different than I am. I want them to like me. They probably don't all like me, but I'd like to be nicer to them. (plaintively) How am I going to get some spirit? (82.12.10)

Patti wanted people to like her. She was sure her kindergarten children liked her and that gave her a great deal of satisfaction. The grade fives and sixes were quite another thing. She wasn't sure they liked her, and she wasn't even sure she liked them any more.

> These kids are really spoiled. When I was a patrol we got one party a year and these kids get six. We didn't get hot chocolate when it was cold, and here these kids are complaining that they aren't getting it and we haven't even had any cold weather yet. (83.01.04)

Patti felt there was a lot one could do with the patrols and she'd like to work with them again "- but not next year." She felt her major responsibilities this year were to her kindergarten classes, and she didn't really have the time or effort to get as involved with the patrols as she would have liked. First-year teachers need to be very careful about taking on too many additional responsibilities.

Even though her experience with the patrols had made Patti a bit wary of older students, she did involve some of them with her kindergarten classes. In December the grade seven class accompanied them on an outdoor weiner roast, while the grade six children were in to help make chocolates for Christmas. Patti believed it was beneficial for both the older and younger students to have an opportunity to interact.

In October, Patti had a grade nine work experience girl assigned to her two afternoons a week. Although Patti found it hard to accept that "she didn't do things the way I would," she felt that her earlier work with Leaders in Training, a group of teenage girls, had helped her be quite realistic in her expectations. "They're really young and need lots of encouragement." (82.10.04) At first she found giving a mark difficult, but came to see it as just part of the feedback that was going to help the student become more aware of her own strengths and weaknesses as Patti saw them.

Whether it was older students, work experience students, or mothers helping out, Patti appreciated their assistance but had to struggle with accepting things being done differently than she would have done them.

> When you ask someone to do something, you have to accept how it is: Like some of the alphabet cards are crooked, but you can't change them around. You just don't go and redo it. It's hard to accept. You want everything to be perfect - the way you think is perfect. (82.11.03)

However, Patti learned to accept that people have different standards of performance and if you expect them to help you must appreciate their efforts. Had Patti not come to this realization, I expect few people would have felt good about their involvement, including Patti herself.

Initially, Patti was so busy with her two kindergarten classes that she had to make a conscious effort to get to know the other teachers. She had forced herself to go to a corn roast as school just opened, and although she tried to make time to go to the staff room, she wasn't always that comfortable there. In fact much of what she saw happening there was rather frightening. "There's so much backstabbing and putting other teachers down. I saw some of that when I was student teaching, but not so vicious." (82.11.03) She didn't feel part of the "in group," nor was she sure she wanted to be. However, she acknowledged that part of her feelings about the staff depended a lot on how she was feeling on a given day.

> If I'm tired and sensitive, then I feel they're not a very friendly staff. If I'm feeling good, then I feel they're okay. They are quite cliquey, but very professional. They're really involved with their own classes. No one ever comes along and says, "Gee you're doing a nice job" or "That's a great idea." (82.11.19)

During the fall Patti often experienced a real sense of isolation and separateness from most of the staff. She had not accepted the taken-for-granted norms of the school and was seen by staff as an unknown quantity - a stranger.

One Friday when the teacher across the hall, new to the school, asked her to join him and another teacher for lunch, her reply was "Thanks for asking me anyway Garth. It makes me feel like I belong. Sometimes I really feel left out." (82.11.19) With Patrol meetings every Friday at lunch time, a teaching schedule that didn't correspond with the rest of the staff, and a natural tendency to stay in her room and "get everything ready for the next period," Patti tended to isolate herself from staff too. However, this gradually changed.

Amid the hectic pre-Christmas rush, Patti took out time to make chocolates for the staff as well as a special greeting for each teacher. "I'm going to do a nut for everyone on staff. (A walnut shell sprayed gold with a handwritten message inside.) Then I can specially thank everyone who's helped me this year." (82.12.16) Although she questioned spending her precious time this way, Patti wanted to be accepted and felt she needed to make some overtures to her colleagues. "I thought maybe I should be planning for my class, but it's important to do things for others too." (82.12.16)

Patti was becoming aware that teaching is much more than just working with children. It's also interacting with a great many other people and living comfortably with a staff. When she returned after the Christmas holidays, "I felt like I should mix and get to know the other teachers. I've been to a gold, a Jafra, a tupperware, and a student teacher party." (83.01.12) Now Patti was making a real effort to become a part of the staff. "As a first-year teacher you feel obligated to go to extra curricular things so they don't feel you're stand-offish." (83.01.12) Patti had devoted her first four months to getting her class running smoothly. Now it was time to attend to some of her needs as a person. A reciprocal relation developed between Patti and other staff members. As Patti reached out to the other teachers, they responded to her in more open ways: "Oh you do such neat things with your kids," or "Do you have any ideas for ..." became frequent teacher comments. It is as though the staff were waiting and watching to see what this new teacher would be like. Once she was seen as friendly and willing to be part of them, some of the staff were more than willing to include her.

In February, Patti spoke of how her relationship with the rest of staff had changed.

> At first I just wanted to feel everyone out and I didn't want to confide in anyone. Even with Sal, another first-year teacher, I didn't at first. Now I sort of know who I can talk to and where I stand with different people. At first you're just a blob and you don't know where you fit in. Now I feel there are certain people I can go up to and say "hello" and really talk seriously with. Then there are some who are just casual acquaintances. (83.02.28)

Although the very nature of Patti's responsibilities and her natural cautiousness kept her apart from the rest of the staff, she longed for acceptance by the staff.

> At first I think you always want everyone to like you on staff and want everyone to think you're the greatest. I think I'd still like that, but you come to the realization that you do things differently, and you can respect that in others, but you don't necessarily have to love each other. (83.02.28)

Perhaps most beginning teachers go out to their schools expecting, or at least hoping to find, kindred spirits who will share their philosophy of education, be compatible and supportive of them as they venture forth in this new experience. It took Patti a few months to discover this was not necessarily so, and a few more until she could accept that it wasn't all that important. Teachers could hold quite different views of education and life. They could do their thing and she could do hers. "Now, I don't feel I *have* to get along with 100% of the staff. I'd say there are about 10% that I think are really terrific, about 80% that are great,, and about 10% I don't get along with ..." (83.02.28) Patti was coming to accept the staff, with all its differences.

Experiencing Support

As school opened, Patti expressed disappointment in that "there are only four new teacher inservices. I wish there were more. You get so many good ideas." (82.09.08) However, when the first one came along, she chose not to attend because

> I didn't want to leave my class. I think it's so important to establish routines with the kids, and if you have a sub walk in I don't think it's fair. Like my sub file isn't set up yet. I have my timetable, but I haven't written down the snack things are here, et cetera. I don't think it's fair to the sub either if the kids don't know the routines. (It was the fifth day of school.) I'm sorry in some ways that I missed it, but still in my heart I feel I've done the right thing even though they (a couple of other new teachers) said it was really good. (82.09.22)

Right from the beginning of the year, Patti had a sense of what was important and right for her to do, and she was not easily swayed to go against her own judgment. Although she did attend some inservices and workshops throughout the year, they did not provide her with a real sense of support. She found them "pretty good," or reassuring in that "every session (at the Teachers' Convention in February) confirmed that I was doing okay." (83.02.28) However she was disappointed that the sessions did not introduce her to new ideas and ways of working with children.

Patti found her greatest sense of support came from people. High on her list were the children themselves. "The enthusiasm from the kids makes all the effort worthwhile." (83.02.28) She also felt having another beginning teacher in the same school had been very important.

> I'm glad there's another first-year teacher here. After school we sit down and share what's happened and how we're feeling about things. It helps as you're trying to fit into staff. They're great here, but we're so busy working that we don't get to know them. Sal and I say, "Are we ever going to fit in?" All the other teachers are already established and have each other and know what they can share; so we share. (82.10.18)

Sal and Patti were kindred spirits in a strange new situation. They didn't yet know who they could trust or what the rules were, so it was safer to share their concerns, their questioning of the system, their failures and their successes, with each other. Sal was someone with whom to go to professional meetings and receptions, but more importantly it was someone else who was "going through exactly the same kind of things." (83.01.12)

The principal, Jim Ayres, was another key person in making Patti feel comfortable and secure at Alnwick. His comment on having new teachers in his school was that they

> need all the help they can get. Although I've found in the past couple of years that first-year teachers have settled right in after a couple of months. They need incidental help with unexpected things, like a phone call from an irate parent, or how to handle a situation on supervision. I try to pop in two or three times a week so if there are any concerns or questions they have a chance to ask me. I always have four "pit stops" a year with every teacher so we can sit down and discuss how things are going. It helps me keep in touch with what's happening in their classrooms, and allows them a chance to bring up any concerns. (82.12.13: interview with principal)

Mr. Ayres felt an important part of his role was to "help" the new teacher get established. He did this through being available to clarify school policies, making suggestions and providing positive reinforcement.

The principal had inaugurated "pit stops" as the size of his staff increased to insure that he had some committed time to sit down with each staff member. He invited me, with Patti's consent, to sit in on her first "pit stop". He started out on a positive note. "First for the warm fuzzies. I'm really pleased with how you're doing. Even more so than I expected." Then he proceeded to ask Patti about her students, any concerns or problems she might have and a discussion on the required system evaluation for new teachers. He asked "how the school might be more supportive," and if there was anything he could do to help. Patti asked a few clarifying questions about school policies, they discussed her program and how she had more hands-on activities than the other kindergarten class. Mr.

Ayres assured her she was "a professional in charge of what she did in her own room. I'm very pleased with how things are going in your class Patti." (82.09.29) Patti felt it had been very positive and his praise made her feel great. She found the "pit stops" supportive in that they gave her regular feedback, as well as provided an opportunity to voice any concerns she had.

Although Patti was pleased to have Mr. Ayres popping in to her classroom regularly, she was aware some staff viewed it as interference.

> I think it's great that the principal is that interested in what's happening. Jim's been away this past week and I've got so many questions to ask him. Often I don't even know he's been in, but it's sure a good chance to ask questions. (82.10.18)

Just as Mr. Ayres had hoped, his popping in and out provided Patti with frequent informal opportunities to check things out. Often they didn't seem important enough to make a trip to the office, or set up an appointment to discuss - just those "little incidental things" that can be so disconcerting to a beginning teacher.

After Christmas, Mr. Ayres cut back on the frequency of his visits. Both Patti and Sal missed them and initially interpreted it as lack of interest. "Has he given up on us? Aren't we doing a good job?" (83.01.12) Perhaps Mr. Ayres felt they were doing fine and it was safe now to withdraw some of his support. How quickly people come to take something for granted. How easy it is to become dependent on someone else rather than utilize one's own inner resources.

Patti acknowledges many people have supported her in her years of preparing to be a teacher, as well as through this "first" year in the profession.

> I feel really good about all the support I get from my boyfriend and my mom and dad. They've been really good. Then there's my brother and my grandparents, and of course, my Aunt Belle. They've all supported me.
>
> Then there are my teachers at University. Cindy gave me confidence in myself and lots of feedback when I taught under her. Shelly, for nominating me for the Pearl Turner Award and getting everyone to back her choice.
>
> When I was student teaching and interning there was Lou and Mrs. Blossom. They showed an interest in me and keep on giving me support. They really cared about me and Mrs. Blossom still phones to see how I'm doing this year. (83.02.28)

Patti, just as Joy and Caroline, felt it is the people who really care about you that touch your life in meaningful ways, that make a difference in what you do. Staff and parents who showed an interest in, and appreciation of, what she was doing were also supportive, like "Jim coming in and saying, 'Oh, isn't that a neat idea' or 'What a good game'" Consultants like Melinda Oaks saying, "I don't believe this is your first year you're doing so well," or other teachers valuing my opinion, "Do you have some ideas for ...?" "And you Lorene. It's been great having you come in every week. I know you're not supposed to be, but I really look forward to sharing things with you." (83.02.28)

Patti also felt her formal evaluations had been supportive. "Maybe I'm geared that way from University, but it was important to know I was doing okay. It was like getting a good mark at midterm. It sort of told me I was on the right track." (83.02.28) Another indicator that Patti was on the right track came when she was nominated from her area for the Edwin Parr Award for Teaching Excellence in the Beginning Year.

The support Patti really valued was mostly informal and personal. The structured meetings and "assigned" buddies did not seem to provide her with the nurturing that was so important to her during her beginning year.

Balancing Her Professional and Personal Life

"I'm going to take the weekends off for myself," almost became a ritual chant during the early days of September. "I'll work late during the week - and maybe do a couple hours on Sunday, but I deserve some time for myself." (82.09.13) Patti seemed to be trying to impress upon herself that this was a reasonable expectation and important for her well being. Her success at retaining "the weekends for herself" was intermittent, and she often reported having spent "all day Saturday searching for some games and things for her class" or "all day Sunday planning for a special activity".

By the middle of October she commented, "I'm still working towards just working during the week, but I just never seem to get through. I feel guilty if I'm not working all the time." (82.10.18) She was coming to the realization that she couldn't do everything she wanted. She was beginning to set priorities.

> No, I'm not going to do this. I can get someone else to do cutting and tracing. I'd be making better use of my time to be planning educational experiences. (82.10.18)

Patti was tentatively involving others in the ongoing activities within the classroom. This was not always easy, as we saw in an earlier section, but she was learning to delegate responsibility. She was sorting out those activities that only she could do, and those that any one of a number of people could do.

Even though she firmly believed she should have a personal life as well as a professional life, she found it difficult at times.

> It's hard to find time for yourself - for your own important responsibilities. Like last week my boyfriend's parents were here from Winnipeg, and I was involved in shopping and cooking for them. You know, I felt guilty that I wasn't doing school work. (82.10.18)

She had tried to convince herself that if she worked hard during the week she could justify taking the weekends off. It seemed like a betrayal of her own vow to start taking time off during the week - even for something as important as future inlaws.

As October drew to a close, Patti was overwhelmed at the number of professional meetings, inservices and receptions there were to attend. Within a two-week period there were five "after school" inservices and two evening receptions for new teachers. All this combined with Hallowe'en, a field trip, a school social, a patrol meeting, impending report cards, along with regular teaching responsibilities. Even though they all looked interesting, she realized she had to set some priorities if she was going to survive the next few weeks. There were no options on her school responsibilities, but she did manage to eliminate three of the inservices on the basis of "having enough background in that area." She was learning to be selective.

By December, Patti was able to take an occasional "night off" without feeling guilty. When we met one evening for dinner, her opening comment was, "Tonight I felt good. I'm really excited about coming out. I just walked away from the school and knew things would be okay." (82.12.01) She also felt she was finally making some headway at keeping her weekends free. That same evening she reported, with some pride, "I took all last weekend off. My evaluation was over, the barn raising was over, and I felt I could relax." (82.12.01)

Patti felt she was having some success at getting a balance in her professional and personal life, but she was glad she didn't have a husband to be accountable to; not just for her time, but also financially.

> I've kept track roughly of what I've spent on school things, and it's over $1,000.00 so far. Can you imagine trying to explain that to a husband if you're trying to save for a house? This way I can do it and if anyone objects I can say, "It's really none of your business." (82.12.01)

Patti appreciated the freedom she had as a single person to use her time and her money as she chose. Just as a partner might have restricted her spending, so might they have interfered with her working until nine or nine-thirty every night. "How do married people ever do it?" This is an important question. Patti worked hard at getting a balance in her life, with a modicum of success, and she just had herself and her work to sort out. It becomes much more complex when you add a marriage partner and even more complicated if you add children. This is one aspect of teaching that is rarely touched upon in "education courses".

As Christmas approached, the pace and demands of school and her social life accelerated, leaving Patti feeling pushed and overwhelmed.

> When am I going to get my Christmas cards done? I haven't done any lesson plans all week. It's all up here (pointed to her head) I haven't thought of anything but Christmas, but I just don't get it written down.... Tonight I have to clean my apartment, get to the bank, get the stuff for making chocolates (at school and for her own party), help my folks with the neighborhood party.... Wednesday night's our Christmas concert, Thursday's the party at school ... I'm just so grouchy, I wonder when I'll get anything done for myself. When *am* I going to get my Christmas cards done? (82.12.10)

Even Patti was running into difficulty with Christmas preparations. How much more stressful it would have been if she hadn't learned to pace herself earlier in the term.

Her plans for the Christmas holidays were to:

> Take time off. I'm not going to do any work. Maybe I'll come in one day and clean up the room. If John (her boyfriend) is here, I'm going to spend time with him. I think I owe him some time.
>
> I could plan all my units for the next three months but if I had them all ready then I would be doing something else -- making another game or something. If I take time off, then I'll come back all refreshed and ready to go. (82.12.16)

Although the period immediately before Christmas was stressful for Patti, Ferguson (1982) claims we can handle that sort of "short-term stress naturally because of the body's rest-and-renew response." When people deny their body an opportunity to rest and renew itself, they often become ill. Wisely, Patti allowed her body to renew itself over the holidays.

When she came back in January, Patti was even more determined to carve out some time for herself. She felt reasonably comfortable with how her program was running, so decided "to do some things for myself. I'm taking Jazzercize at noons on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and John and I are taking social dancing Friday nights." (83.01.12) Although she didn't have everything quite the way she wanted in her program, she felt she was being more realistic now than at the beginning of the year.

> I think you tend to be too idealistic when you start ... Now I'm starting to realize you can't have everything perfect. That's as much as I can do right now. I still feel guilty at times ... but I've come to the point where I realize I can't do it all at once. (83.02.28)

Patti was setting priorities in her life. She wanted to be a superior teacher, but she also realized she must pace and renew herself along the way so she could go on giving of herself.

I Want to Teach Next Year

On the second day of school, Patti exclaimed, "I really enjoyed the whole day. I was relaxed, and I feel like I've always been teaching." (82.09.09) Patti had found her place. She had longed to be a teacher, and now she was. Throughout the fall she often commented on how thankful she was to have a kindergarten. "I sure feel fortunate that I've got a kindergarten class. They're such a good group: I don't have one really bad kid. I'm so lucky." (82.12.01) From September on, she spoke of ways she'd do things differently next year. In speaking of her interaction with parents, "Now next year I'll do it differently ... I'll have my own executive, more meetings, more hands on activities - of course it depends on the parents." (82.09.29) Being on a temporary contract, it did cross her mind that she was not guaranteed a kindergarten for next year, but she was optimistic.

> I really hope I get a kindergarten next year. There are so many things I can improve on. Even if I had to move to another school I'd rather teach kindergarten. I like it here, but I'm not ready to move to another grade. (82.10.18)

Many people share Patti's desire to have a second chance to work on something, to improve it. The beginning teacher has so many new encounters that first year; new routines, new roles, new staff, new material to cover, new children. By the second year, many of these are familiar and take less effort to maintain, so the teacher is freer to focus on refining her teaching style.

By December she was definitely concerned about what and where she would be teaching next year. "I hope there's enough kids for a full time kindergarten next year." Then she laughed almost self-consciously and added, "I don't know why I should be worried about next year when I haven't got through this year." But Patti was worried. "Last year they (the school) were getting more kids each week. This year it's going the other way. Right now we only have sixty children in kindergarten, so that's only three classes of twenty. That means a half-time kindergarten for me likely." (82.12.01)

Although she didn't dwell on it, Patti was assessing how every activity went and subconsciously thinking how it could be changed, improved or handled next year.

> I was strict at the beginning because I was scared, but I hope I stay that strict each year. They get to know where they stand right off and later we can have fun and relax. (82.12.16)

As she worked through themes and various activities, she too considered how they might be modified and which ones she'd retain. "I'll sure use the gingerbread idea the first day. That seemed to work really well." (82.12.16) She was always open to new ideas and ways to do things. "Another teacher (at another school) has this neat idea for Valentine's Day. She does *A Special Day Called LOVE* with poems, songs and baking related to love. I'd like to do it with my class next year." (82.12.16)

At her January "pit stop" with the principal, she shared her concern over having a position next year.

> Patti: I'm concerned about next year. I love it here, but if Edmonton Public is thinking of letting people go, I'm willing to go to the boonies if I have to, but I want to teach. I don't care where. I want to teach kindergarten
>
> Principal: But you want to teach kindergarten.
>
> Patti: I'd like to, but I would teach another grade.I really don't think that's best for the kids or me. You know, I'm really starting to feel comfortable with it and know where I'm going. Next year I'm anticipating even more so, plus I'll have all the things I've made. I think I'll be better as a teacher in the same grade if possible. I'm not afraid to teach any other grade. That's not the reason. I just think it makes more sense for me and the children.
>
> Principal: At this time I'll say you'll be here to teach kindergarten full time next year. The system has to be concerned about the system as a whole and cuts do have to be made.
>
> Patti: I know. Is there anything I can do? I'm saying, do I get a resume ready and start sending it all over? I don't want to be left sitting next September. (83.01.12)

This concern was very much with Patti, and all first year teachers, throughout the year. By March and April rumors were flying that no continuous contracts were being offered. However, Mr. Ayres assured Patti that she would have a job. Perhaps not kindergarten, but some position at the school.

As full time kindergarten positions came available at other schools, Patti wondered if she should apply so she could be certain of what she'd have. However, it seemed a bit premature to ask for a transfer before she'd been offered a continuous contract.

Even when Patti became the official Edwin Parr nominee from Area F[40] she still was not sure if she would be offered a continuous contract. It is sad that even the six first-year teachers who were considered to show outstanding teaching feared their jobs were in jeopardy.

In May Patti was offered a continuous contract, and Mr. Ayres again assured her there would be a position for her at Alnwick. Patti was elated. Now she was guaranteed a position for next year, and for as long as she wished to stay with Edmonton Public School Board. Her enthusiasm was tempered somewhat by the fact her friend Sal still didn't know her fate. After three or four weeks of frantic calls to Central Office, and reassurances from Mr. Ayres, Sal got a call from "downtown". "I'm sorry, we're unable to renew your contract for next year. You can stay on as a 'temporary' if you wish, something might come up in the fall, however, we can't guarantee you anything." Sal was shattered and Patti was heartbroken for her friend. They had lived through this year together. What an awful ending. The services of three "temporary staff" were terminated as well. For awhile Patti felt like an outcast.

> The ones that didn't get jobs were really great. They never made me feel this way. It was other people on staff. They seemed to be saying, "Why should Patti have a job when these other four don't?" They asked how I applied for the award. I didn't, Mr. Ayres nominated me. Then they seemed to insinuate that I was his favorite. (83.06.28)

Patti had mixed feelings. Although she was happy she had a position, she was sad for Sal and had "cried and cried when she heard the news." She felt empathy for the four who didn't get contracts. " It could so easily have been me," but felt hurt and some anger towards some staff who seemed to resent her good fortune. "Why should they be that way? They have jobs next year. I could understand if the ones who'd been let go felt some resentment towards me, but not those others. I'd have been happy if someone on our staff had received an award." (83.06.28) She felt some sense of betrayal on the part of the principal. "He had assured both Sal and me that we'd have jobs. I was lucky, but what if I'd been Sal. I'd rather have known earlier so I could have applied somewhere else." (83.06.28)

In talking to the principal, he had been optimistic they both would get contracts. "I fought hard for them,but the board had a policy and they can't make exceptions."

---

[40] Edmonton Public School Board has divided the city into six geographic zones for administrative purposes.

(83.06.28)

Even though Patti knew she had a contract for next year, there was still some uncertainty as to what and where she would be teaching. If the kindergarten population was down in the fall, she might have half-time kindergarten at Alnwick and half-time at another school. Alnwick was going to have a new principal, so he might choose to have Patti half-time kindergarten and half-time some other grade. Nothing could be pinned down with certainty until next fall. As the popular lyric goes, "Ce sera sera". At least she knew she was going to teach next year!

IV. THEMES EMERGING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF THREE BEGINNING TEACHERS

A. Introduction

What is it like to be a beginning teacher of young children?

In an attempt to discover the meaning beginning teachers gave to their experiences of becoming teachers of young children, I joined three early childhood teachers in their classrooms on a regular basis throughout their first year. I tried to look beneath the activities to discover the meaning they gave to their experiences.

Initially, I noted what I observed and what they did and said about how the year was going. These observations became stepping off points for exploring the meaning their experiences had for them. As the year progressed, I came to know their children, share their concerns and their aspirations, and gain a deeper understanding of them as human beings in their world.

As students graduate from Faculties of Education across this country they concern themselves with all the things they must "do" as a teacher. They have undoubtedly taken courses in child development and learning, methods courses on how to teach reading, mathematics and science, liberal arts courses in music and history, and perhaps only incidentally spent some time exploring who they are and what it means to be a human being. As they begin their careers in education, they often feel they have arrived; "I'm a real teacher at last." They have worked towards this day for several years; they have some idea of what to teach and how to go about it. They have some awareness of the things teachers do, they will have their own class, they will be rewarded by a pay check rather than merely marks and comments. What is it like to be a new teacher entering an alien territory, attempting to become established, accepted?

In Chapter Three I attempted to describe what it was like for Joy, Caroline and Patti to experience their first year of teaching. In this chapter are presented portrayals of themes that emerged from my reflection upon the descriptions of the experiences of these three teachers. I submit them as my insights into what beginning teachers experience as they move into their first position as an early childhood teacher.

B. The Beginning Teacher as Stranger: from Student to Teacher

It may seem inappropriate to consider beginning teachers as strangers. After all, they have spent most of their lives in classrooms, so it would seem this move back into a school should be an easy, natural step. However, their time was done as students, and in our society there is a distinction between the roles of student and teacher. Generally, it is held that a student is one who learns; a teacher is one who teaches. In a paper on "The Political Language of the Helping Professions", Edelman shows how labels such as teacher and learner actually categorize people and define their status, and their rights. He maintains that much of the power professionals hold over their clients is due to the specialized language they use which makes it difficult for the "lay public to understand or judge them." (1975, p. 6) For a person moving from client status to professional status, there is a great deal of transformation to be made. Now the new teacher is becoming one of "them" and must put aside much that has been taken for granted in her student role and learn new roles and take on new responsibilities. She could be thought of as the homecomer returning to a familiar place after an absence. She can no longer take things for granted. She must question things not normally questioned. She must come to a new understanding of school so she can participate appropriately in the ongoing activities. Although the Bachelor of Education program is designed to prepare beginning teachers for this new role, it may tend to relegate them to the role of student throughout the four years. Even field placement, which is intended to provide practical experience in being a teacher, requires her to fit into another teacher's existing framework and teach in an "acceptable" (to the teacher and the faculty consultant) way if she is to get an acceptable report. While the education student remains answerable to the professional educator, in many ways the university student's life could be considered a free existence in comparison to that of a teacher. There is considerable choice in which courses and at what times students take them, whereas the teacher is assigned to a specific class with little option for "dropping it" or taking it later in the day. Within courses, students are frequently given choices of topics to pursue, while teachers are given "the curriculum" to cover. Students, if they choose, have a wide range of people to become involved with in scholarly and social pursuits. Teachers become part of a staff with which they will be involved in scholarly and semi-social pursuits, whether they like them or not. At

University, students often schedule classes to accommodate their personal preferences or needs, while teaching requires one to be "on the job" for specified periods of time five days a week. Projects and exams scheduled throughout the year provide a number of deadlines for students, whereas every day becomes a deadline for teachers. Feedback for students is primarily extrinsic, through marks and comments on papers and exams. For teachers, there is little extrinsic feedback, so it becomes more important to find intrinsic rewards in self-assessment and student progress. The beginning teacher must interpret and re-order what she sees in the light of her new role.

Usually this chosen entry into a new situation is viewed as an opportunity to experience new things and is approached with both pleasure and anxiety. In the present study each of the three teachers was looking forward to this new adventure with great excitement. Each teacher had been invited to become part of an existing staff, and had chosen to accept because she felt comfortable with what the principal had shared with her about the school. Caroline had consciously chosen a school "that shared her philosophical beliefs" as she felt this setting would be more open to working with children in non-structured, non-traditional ways. She quickly became part of the existing staff and became involved in joint decision making and plans of action. Her easy transition from student to teacher was undoubtedly aided by being part of a small like-minded staff and having grown up with a teacher / mother in her home.

While Caroline initially felt comfortable in her new school, as she became more familiar with the existing staff's points of view, she realized that there were more differences than she had at first realized. In Nash's words, "His (her) greater familiarity with the host and their ways tend to make him (her) more aware of the gulf which separates him (her) from them." (1963, p. 471) Initially she had found her ideas on family grouping generally accepted, but as she persisted in promoting this concept she found the staff responding with, "Oh, you're still idealistic; you're only in your first year so you don't really know yet..." Perhaps the "new stranger" who had fit in so well at first was now being viewed as a proselytizer who had to be kept in her place. Not only do new teachers experience themselves as strangers in the situation, but they may be viewed by the existing establishment as a stranger to be somewhat wary of.

Patti's entry into Alnwick was somewhat different. With a staff of twenty five there were many different personalities and beliefs. Patti approached the situation cautiously. "I just wanted to feel everyone out.... At first you don't know where you fit in...." While it was important to Patti to be accepted and liked by the staff, she often felt like an outsider that first fall. As she became more aware of staff member's different views of children and teaching, she found it difficult to accept some of them and wondered if they could ever accept her ideas and her. She had always taken for granted that if you went into teaching you must like children and be prepared to work hard at planning for them. Now she found it was not necessarily so. By March Patti was able to separate a person from her ideas. "I have come to the realization that teachers do things differently and you can respect that in others, but you don't necessarily have to love each other." Even though Patti had become a fully participating member of the staff, conforming to many of the school practices, she remained somewhat detached and questioning throughout the year. Patti's adaptation to the new situation was eased somewhat when she found a like-minded ally in Sal, the other new teacher at her school. Together they were able to question the taken-for-granted norms of the school culture. They were able to share their doubts (are we ever going to fit in?), and their hopes. Although they felt separate from the established staff, they had the support of each other. Perhaps partly because of this close relationship with Sal, and partly because of the size of the school, Patti remained in "sociological limbo" for most of the year. In June she expressed, "Next year'll be different. I won't be the new teacher any more."

Joy tended to maintain her own views and was neither much affected by what the existing staff norms and beliefs were, nor did she attempt to promote her own beliefs within the established culture. Although she accepted many of the host school's norms, Joy remained somewhat marginal throughout the year. "In some ways it's a relief to know I'm not going to be here next year. I don't feel so much pressure to conform."

As one considers the beginning teacher entering the field of teaching as a returning stranger, how can she best be prepared to understand this new situation in a way that enables her to both fit in, and yet remain authentically true to her own way of being in the world?

C. "I'm a Real Teacher At Last"

While it is generally accepted that "parents are a child's first teacher" and that most everyone is involved in "teaching" at some time in their lives, society requires a formalized preparation for those who are going to be a "real teacher" in an authorized school.

In considering what it was like for Joy, Caroline and Patti as they began teaching, we must consider what each brought from her past, how these experiences may have affected her present situation, and her plans for the future. Although each person is involved in creating her own personal reality, there are often external constraints that threaten to shape the person in ways not authentic to the individual.

> ... the possibilities among which the person must choose are contingent in many ways on the social order; and the struggle to be is in part a struggle against society's tendency to make an "object" out of the individual... (Greene 1967, p.42)

Greene goes on to elaborate on the importance of choice making for individuals,

> ... each single person must give himself reality by making critical choices in all the situations of his life, committing himself to what he chooses, and renewing himself by making further choices.... It is in this way he authenticates himself as an individual. Education, therefore, must provide opportunities for him to make the decisions which give him continuity as an existing individual. (1967, p. 96)

As young school girls, both Patti and Caroline had mothers in "teaching" roles who involved their girls in working with children. Through opportunities provided by their schools, Patti and Caroline also worked with young children in cross-grade projects. Early on each experienced the thrill of helping someone else discover meaning, and ultimately set her heart on becoming a teacher. To become a teacher, one has to attend University so both Patti and Caroline enrolled at the University of Alberta. For Patti this meant working hard in high school to attain the academic standard required for a scholarship. This was no new experience for her. She was accustomed to setting goals for herself and working hard to achieve them, even if it entailed sacrifices such as giving up parties to babysit so she could earn money to buy her horse. For Caroline, the important part of becoming a teacher was learning how to interact effectively with children. When she felt her University program was not giving her enough experience with children, she chose to interrupt her program temporarily and work with children. On the other hand, Joy finished high school with no specific plans for her future. After a leadership course and a year of teaching in a private school, she felt a growing commitment to working with children. She enjoyed interacting with young children and experienced a sense of satisfaction through planning and working with them. It seemed "right" that she would become involved in a career with children. With three years of actual teaching experience, Joy felt in a position to judge the relevance of University course work. She approached University with an inner conviction to choose what she felt would make her a good teacher. She sought out professors and courses that helped her pursue her interests. Based on her understanding of young children and her theoretical background, Joy personalized approaches to working with children. She was viewed by classmates as someone who "really knew what she was doing" and professors invited her to share her ideas with classes. She excelled academically, winning several awards based on high marks. She felt her past experience in teaching situations had been valuable in giving her a good foundation for educational studies. Although she had "fairly satisfactory" student teaching experiences, she found the pace "hectic" and the situation "unrealistic", with a lot of "emphasis on lesson planning".

For Joy there had been a difference between her student teaching and earlier teaching experiences. As a "real" teacher she had made decisions and taken responsibility for them. She was involved in creating her own reality. As a "student" teacher she was often expected to translate someone else's choices into action and the "real" teacher was ultimately responsible for what happened. There was little opportunity to experience any control over the situation or what she was to do, for during field placement the student enters another person's classroom part way through the year and "you don't know what happened before", nor do they experience the completion of the year. No matter how much practicum there is in a student's program, they are always working in a situation where someone else has laid out the expectations, and is ultimately responsible for what happens. As students graduate and are assigned to their own classrooms this may well be the most significant transformation they will have to make. Suddenly hundreds of decisions must be made every day for which the teacher is responsible and answerable. Joy did not find this difficult for she, as Patti, had been responsible for setting up and operating programs. On the other hand Caroline worried in September about making the wrong decision. Even though Caroline had spent one year as a kindergarten aide and another year in a day care, there was always someone else to make the decisions.

September was the first time she'd been totally on her own.

As these three teachers entered their first year as "real" teachers, Patti was very conscious of the way "the system" expected things to be done. Initially she conformed to "the expected", which provided guidelines for her actions and enabled her to fall back on the authority of the system to support them. For example, "At school the policy is that children sit on the lost and found box to wait for their parents if they aren't here when class is over." Although Patti didn't feel comfortable with some of these procedures, it did give her a sense of security, and after all she "didn't want to rock the boat."

How uncomfortable it can be to "rock the boat" or to question the questionable. As newcomers within the school system, how many new teachers are able to stand up for what they really believe in? How many "give up their freedom"? In *Teacher as Stranger* Greene speaks of this. "If the teacher agrees to submerge himself into the system, if he consents to being defined by others' views of what he is supposed to be, he gives up his freedom to see, to understand, and to signify for himself." (1973, p. 270)

Caroline knew what she wanted, and was not prepared to "submerge herself into the system" either at University or once she began teaching. When Caroline did get into courses or activities that challenged her she became totally engrossed. "If I get really interested in something I devote all my time and effort to it - I guess to the detriment of all other courses or activities." This approach to University seemed to carry over into her first year of teaching. She was ecstatic about having a kindergarten class and went to great lengths to prepare herself and her classroom in the months preceding school opening. Although she was not enthusiastic about taking over grade five, she was conscious of the trust placed in her by the principal, and did not want to let her down or to tarnish the reputation she was gaining as a top-notch first year teacher. After experiencing considerable frustration and failure with her grade fives, she eventually became interested in them as twelve individual challenges and regained much of the original enthusiasm she'd had for her kindergarten class. Unlike the "Grand Old Duke of York" who"when he was up, he was up, and when he was down, he was down, and when he was only half way up he was neither up nor down, " Caroline never seemed to be "only half way up." She was either up, or down. When she was up, she was bubbly, enthusiastic, full of energy and ideas, worked endlessly at preparing activities and materials, thought her classes were great, teaching was great and everything looked rosy. When she was down, she felt she wasn't doing a good job, life seemed to hold too much challenge, too much change, people held unrealistic expectations of her, and she felt tired and depressed. Whenever she was down, she usually responded positively to a "pat on the head" by the principal. "Betty's very reassuring. She came in and did an evaluation of my kindergarten. It was just what I needed. Now I'm all gung ho again. I felt completely different - ready to devote my life to teaching again."

Both Caroline and Patti needed constant reassurance that they were doing well. At one point Caroline ventured that she suspected it was the students who had done well in school and received lots of "pats on the head", that went into teaching. Perhaps there is some truth to that, yet Joy did not need external "pats on the head". She relied more on her own personal sense of accomplishment. Right from the start Joy was involved in creating a situation where she could relate to children on her terms. She was breaking new ground where there were few guidelines so she set her own goals and was less concerned about achieving external praise and approval than Patti or Caroline. Joy had attained a level of independence and a sense of direction the others had not. Upon graduating from high school in British Columbia, Joy decided to study in another province, and after working for three years she chose to attend University, whereas Caroline and Patti both attended University right out of high school, with continuous support and encouragement from parents.

In *Letters to a Young Poet*, Rilke advises, "We *are* solitary. We may delude ourselves and act as though this were not so. But how much better to realize that we are so, yes, even to begin by assuming it, " (in Greene, 1967, p. 30) Joy recognized that each of us is essentially in this life alone and realized how important it is to build up inner resources to face life's many challenges. Patti and Caroline have yet to reach this understanding.

D. Someone Cares

> I remember the days I felt good.
> I remember the days I felt special.
> I remember the teachers who shared something personal about themselves.
> I remember those days. (Caroline, 83.06.22)

> I guess that's the same in everything, when you go somewhere or do something, unless you're interacting with people who seem to have an interest in you as a person, you don't really carry away from that anything that's lasting or going to affect your life. (Joy, 83.02.24)

> Some of my teachers impressed me. I remember my grade four teacher. She used to make me feel good about myself. (Patti, 83.02.06)

As these teachers thought back over what had been meaningful in their own education, it was their encounters with teachers who really cared about them. It was the teachers or professors who had taken a real interest in them as people, had excited them about learning and had touched their lives in unforgettable ways. Each of these teachers wanted to touch the lives of children they worked with, to let them know someone really cared. "My very first consideration is, 'Are they happy with themselves and their surroundings?'" (Caroline) "When they go out that door I hope they've had a satisfactory day - a good experience ... I want them to know I'll help them through difficulties and problems ... I want them to feel that the process of learning is exciting, is fun...." (Joy)

In a book on *Helping Relationships*, Combs, Avila and Purkey (1973) comment on the relationship between caring and learning:

> People do not behave in terms of ideas they do not care about. *Caring*, let it be noted, is what we mean by emotion. The discovery of meaning and its accompanying emotion lie at the very heart of learning. The practice of education, counselling, social work, or pastoral care which rules out feeling, of necessity, makes itself ineffective. The attempt to separate knowing from feeling or personal meaning is to make learning sterile. Humanism is not anti-intellectual. On the contrary, it seeks realistically to make intelligence functional. It is concerned about caring and personal meaning - not just because that is a nice way to live, but because it is the hard-headed, necessary road to producing the kinds of people we want and need. (p. 101)

While Joy, Patti and Caroline speak of "really caring" for the children they work with so they can become happily engaged in learning, Buber (1955) speaks of the essential relationship between teacher and child as being dialogical. The teacher "must be really there, really facing the child, not merely there in spirit.... In order to be and to remain truly present to the child she must have gathered the child's presence into her own (life). Then there is reality *between* them, there is mutuality." (p.49) In *Talks with Teachers* Lillian Katz also speaks of the importance of the teacher knowing the learner,

> ... if we assume that a major function of a teacher is to help the learner to improve, refine, develop, or in some way modify his or her understanding (construction of reality) of the concept, task, idea, or skill to be learned. In order to fulfill this function the teacher must *uncover* what the learner's understanding of the task or concept to be learned actually is. It is in this sense that the teacher must know the learner. (1977, p.58)

If a teacher is to know a learner in the way Buber and Katz speak of, it implies a genuine interest in and caring for the learner. Each of the teachers in the study felt "knowing the learner" was a high priority. Large numbers work against getting to know individuals and initially Joy was frustrated by the size of her class and the multiple demands on her time that interfered with really getting to know her thirty students. Although Patti also started with thirty students, she was able to get to know them more quickly as small groups of five or six children came in for a half day orientation the first week of school. This gave her time to interact with each child on an individual basis, find out interests, abilities and needs. By the time the whole group came together on the fifth day of school, she had already been able to develop a personal relationship with each of them. Perhaps if Joy had been able to have a staggered enrollment for the first few days, she would not have felt so overwhelmed in her attempts to get to know her class as individuals. Then, knowing more about each learner's needs and interests, she might not have been so frustrated in her attempts to plan appropriate activities. This would have enabled her to relate to her class in a more personal and caring way right from the outset of school. Caroline was in the fortunate position of having only six students in September, so she was able to come to know them as individuals early in the year.

Greene (1967) states "...the teacher must attempt to distinguish each individual student in his uniqueness, to avoid stereotyping or objectifying him, and, when possible, to take the "others" vantage point toward a situation engaging them both." (p. 54) It was difficult for Joy to do anything but see her group as "the grade two class" and it distressed her to objectify them in this way. She found herself unwillingly succumbing to the danger Buber speaks of "... the will to educate may degenerate into arbitrariness, and that the educator may carry out his selection and his influence from himself and his idea of the pupil, not from the pupil's own reality...." (1955, p. 50) While Joy did not feel she was able to develop learning experiences from *each* "pupil's own reality" until January or February, she had rejected some prepared grade two curriculum materials in the fall as inappropriate for many of her children. "The mathematics materials were too abstract..." With no specified provincial curriculum for kindergarten, Patti and Caroline were freer to develop activities as they wished. When Caroline started teaching grade five she was initially concerned about "having to teach the curriculum". Without having time, or the inclination, to familiarize herself with the grade five curriculum just prior to Christmas, she started by providing learning experience that she felt would be appropriate. As she came to know the students, she realized that *her* perception of what was right for them did not fit with their view of what was right. She had come to the understanding Kierkegaard speaks of in writing about human education, "... to be a teacher in the right sense is to be a learner." He goes on to say, "This is the secret of the art of helping others... In order to help another effectively, I must understand more than he - yet first of all surely I must understand what he understands." (in Greene, 1967, p. 97) Once Caroline came to understand, or know, what the individual grade five students knew and were interested in learning, she began picking up on it, and together they jointly planned future learning experiences. Caroline and the students were all much happier with this arrangement. In Merleau-Ponty's words they had "given themselves up to the happiness of reflecting together." (in Greene, 1973, p. 270)

Joy and Caroline cared enough about children that they earnestly sought to meet each child where he was. Even though Patti sincerely cared for her children and strove to provide for their individual needs, she approached learning more from her reality than theirs. In each of their classrooms most of the children were happy and eagerly approached the day's activities.

There are some similarities in the way the teachers approached their first classes and how they themselves approached preparing to be teachers. When Caroline felt the Bachelor of Education program was not giving her the practical experience with children that she felt she needed to become a teacher, she changed "her curriculum" to include work in the field. Joy approached her University studies intent on finding out all she could about children, learning, and teaching. When she felt she had not gotten what she needed, she sought out professors and related experiences to supplement "the curriculum". Patti worked hard to find out what the system expected and meet those expectations. It was only when someone took an interest in personalizing learning for Patti that it became a meaningful experience for her.

Young children are astute observers of the adults in their lives and not only readily adopt the attitudes of those they respect and love, but sense what is important to them. Joy, Caroline and Patti cared about the children in their classes, and the children could sense it.

E. Struggle for Control

Upon entering a new school, the beginning teacher is faced with many unknowns. She may be aware of formal lines of communication and procedures, but most schools have informal communication links and customs that play a significant role in how the school operates. This informal organization is familiar and taken for granted by the existing staff, but can be confusing and disconcerting to the new teacher. Into this established milieu the new teacher brings her own beliefs and hopes for what education should be for herself and her children. These beliefs may be fairly consistent with the existing climate or they may be in opposition. In the latter case a tension may arise between what the new teacher feels she is expected to do and what she believes is right for her to do.

Eddy's 1969 study illustrated how the educational bureaucracy, including administrators and fellow teachers, molds the beginning teacher to "fit" into the existing educational system and how powerless the teachers were to have significant effects on the existing system. However, a later study by Lacey (1977) identified three common social strategies that new teachers adopt as they deal with the complexities of a new school. The first is similar to what Eddy found in that the new teacher conforms to the values and practices of the new setting. He calls this "internalized adjustment". The second is "strategic compliance" whereby the new teacher initially goes along with the accepted norms even though she does not agree with them. He refers to the third as "strategic redefinition" in which the teacher consciously tries to change or reform the existing school situation.

In the present study there were numerous incidents of this "struggle for control" between the new teacher and the existing system. In one case the principal clearly stated one of his reasons for hiring a "beginning" teacher was so he could "shape her the way I want". However, this teacher was not readily shaped. Although she conformed to a number of school routines and practises, what she did in her own classroom was very much what she believed was best for her children. Perhaps her own outward show of confidence in what she was doing warded off any attempts the principal and staff might have made to impose their views on her. However, when it came to making a decision about whether or not Joy's class should be split, Joy felt powerless to influence what happened. She believed many of the children needed more special attention than she could possibly give them with thirty in her classroom. Initially she felt she was having some say in what happened, but as September passed she began to feel helpless. "I've given up trying to influence the decision. After all I'm just a new teacher on staff."

Right from the initial staff meeting Caroline felt she had a say in what was happening at her school. Undoubtedly, several factors led to this feeling. With a staff of four, the two new staff members were encouraged to contribute their ideas by the principal's warm, open manner. Having grown up debating educational topics with her mother, Caroline was not hesitant to share her educational views with her colleagues and saw this as an opportunity to influence what was happening in education; Lacey's "strategic redefinition" strategy.

On the other hand, Patti fit into Lacey's "strategic compliance" category, for although she chose not to "rock the boat" at the beginning of the year, she was continually considering ways she would do things differently next year when she was no longer the new teacher. The principal was pleased with his new teacher and assured Patti that she was a professional in charge of what she did in her own room," yet he chided her for having a messy storage room. As long as Patti's actions were acceptable to the principal, he willingly gave her control; however if her actions did not conform to the principal's standard he was ready to exert his control over the situation.

Throughout the year there was continual tension between which aspects of the teaching experience the beginning teacher was in control of and which someone else controlled. While this tension did not cause any major difficulties for any of the teachers in the study, it did result in a constant, often unconscious, checking of limits by the new teachers.

In a similar way there was a struggle for control within each teacher's classroom. Occasionally this was a struggle between the children and the teacher, but most often it was a struggle within the teacher as she sought to create a caring classroom atmosphere in which children were free to take some responsibility for their own behavior and activities, while at the same time respecting the rules and regulations established by the school.

In *Erosion of Childhood*, Val Suransky explores how institutional settings influence a child's mode of being in the world. Rather than enabling a child to "become at home in his world" the child is often expected to "fit into a structure imposed and named by adults." In a similar way a beginning teacher may feel she must fit into a structure already implemented by the institution (school) she has just joined. Each school has certain standards, rules and regulations that must be adhered to by both the teachers and the children. By virtue of the teacher's professional role, certain expectations and powers are vested in the teacher. "The lay public by and large adopts the professional perspective; for its major concern is to believe that others can be trusted to handle the problem.... This public reaction is the politically crucial one, for it confers power upon professionals and legitimizes their norms for society generally." (Edelman, 1975, p. 15) In a sociological study on school teaching, Lortie reports that there is "universal agreement that the teacher must establish and keep sovereignty over classroom affairs.... School practices reinforce it, and beginning teachers soon learn that if their capacity to maintain 'classroom control' is in doubt they may be fired." (1975, p.151)

While all the teachers in this study felt it was important to establish "classroom control," they were also committed to creating an atmosphere of caring in which they could be sensitive to each child. Although these are not necessarily antithetical goals, the first is more oriented to the ritual, time and order of the institution while the second implies an orientation considering the child's ontological needs. Within a caring atmosphere children feel safe to explore, be themselves, make mistakes, get excited about learning, take some responsibility for their own activities and behavior, knowing all the while that the teacher understands and is interested in them as human beings. Lortie's (1975) study found that while many teachers wanted to both relate to the child's personal needs and yet maintain control so tasks could be accomplished, they found them somewhat incompatible.

For beginning teachers it is especially difficult to work out a balance between establishing enough control over the situation so that everyone's needs, including the teacher's, are respected, while at the same time providing their students with enough freedom to participate in making decisions about what their day is going to be like.

In this study, Joy struggled to create a balance between "caring" and "control". Initially she believed that if she were able to create a stimulating, challenging environment, where children were motivated to get involved in their own learning, discipline would not be a problem. However, in order to plan suitable learning activities, she had to know individual children's interests and abilities. Without an appropriate level of control she found it impossible to find time to discover and provide for individual children's varying levels of abilities and interests. Until she knew more about them, she felt she had to teach her class as a whole group. Yet as long as she tried to teach them as a group, most of her attention was directed at controlling. Throughout the fall Joy grasped at whatever classroom management techniques she thought might work. She involved the children in developing classroom rules so they could identify with them; she talked with the class and with individuals about desirable behavior. She banished children to the quiet corner and even to the hall; she sent children to the principal and she employed positive reinforcement. By February "the children knew what was acceptable" and the class was adhering to the rules. Joy was still concerned. While the children had learned to live up to her expectations, she didn't feel they were developing self control or striving to achieve things that were important to them. She began to see positive reinforcement as a very manipulative technique where children's behavior and work was being modified or shaped to conform to external standards. That was not what she wanted. By April Joy was consciously moving towards getting the children to assume responsibility for their own behavior and efforts. "I feel now they are working hard so they'll have a book *they're proud of*, not just one to please me." At last she felt she had attained a teaching style that encouraged a love of learning and the development of self control in her students.

Although Caroline experienced some tension between doing what she felt was best for the children and adhering to school regulations, a small class enabled her to retain a flexibility within her classroom. Caroline based her teaching and discipline on love and respect. She loved her children and they loved her;she treated each child as an important, special human being. She listened carefully to their ideas and concerns and spoke to them quietly and respectfully. She was indignant that the school doctor would even consider labeling one of her active youngsters hyperactive, and was upset when she felt a mother was not sensitive to her child's need to develop a more positive self-concept. Caroline would rate high with anthropologist Ashley Montague, for in a discussion of teaching he claimed, "The greatest gift a teacher has to give a student is his or her love." (1980, p.49) When Caroline became responsible for the grade five students in the afternoon, her approach to classroom control was to cooperatively develop classroom rules. She wanted to be very democratic and involve them in making decisions about how the classroom would be set up and run. On the first day the students developed a list of "rules for the classroom" along with the consequences of not adhering to them. She involved them in organizing their classroom space and choosing which projects they would be involved in. Not having experienced this kind of involvement before, the students viewed Caroline's approach as freedom to do what they wanted, rather than freedom with responsibilities attached. When Caroline realized they were abusing the trust she had placed in them, she tried to adopt an authoritarian approach but felt very uncomfortable with it. Over a number of months Caroline guided her grade fives towards accepting more responsibility for their own learning. She believed they were capable of internalized self-control and this time they lived up to her expectations. By the end of the year, Caroline enjoyed being with her grade fives and there were several indications it was a mutual feeling. As Rothman said, "To receive love genuinely, to receive love with love, and to return love with love, can be the job of teaching." (1977, p. 183).

Patti experienced the least difficulty in maintaining a satisfactory level of control. From observing teachers in a variety of settings and her own varied experiences with children, she had evolved a procedure for classroom management that relied on the authority of the system. Certain rules and behaviors were expected "because that's the way it is at school." Patti's kindergarten children were new to school and readily looked to their teacher for guidance and limits. Patti's firm, no-nonsense approach gave them a clear picture of what she felt was acceptable behavior and the reasons why certain behavior was not acceptable. She felt it was important to establish clear rules and regulations early in the year. Once everyone knew what was expected, she relaxed and felt she could enjoy her class. Near the end of the year, Patti expressed pleasure at how her approach to classroom management had worked well and she planned to emphasize "rules and regulations" again the next fall.

Each of the three teachers handled classroom control in quite a different way. While Joy's evolved slowly over several months of trial and error, she eventually experienced satisfaction in that the children had internalized a desire to learn and control their own behavior. After a school assembly near the end of the year Joy commented on how pleased she was at her class's behavior "and I didn't have to remind or threaten them. They did it on their own!" Caroline's control was based on love, caring and respect. When she tried to use more authoritarian methods she felt uncomfortable and was "sure the kids knew I was faking it." It was important for Caroline to be authentic to her own beliefs and while her methods worked with both the kindergartens and grade fives, it took a bit longer to establish a workable situation with the older students. While Patti's businesslike approach may have intimidated a few children for a few days, her enjoyment of being with the children and providing interesting experiences for them was contagious and early in the year everyone, including the researcher, was caught up in the excitement of each day.

In *The Child and His Image*, Yamamoto states, "Children do need limits, and they will test and probe to find where the limits will finally be consistently placed in their lives." (1972, p. 125) Once children have identified with external controls administered by consistent, loving adults they are able to develop internal controls. If the children have been involved in developing limits and understand why they are necessary, they are more likely to internalize them than if the same limits are imposed on them by the teacher. The first procedure shows a respect for children's ideas and behavior, while the second implies a lack of faith in children's ability to think and act responsibly. In Patti's and Caroline's kindergarten classes, limits were established at the beginning of term while Joy and her class spent much of the fall searching for appropriate limits. Perhaps it was this joint searching and/or the maturity of the grade twos that resulted in more indications of internalized self-control in the grade two class by the end of the year.

F. Uncertainty Can Lead to Distress

Stress is a mode of being in the world. Without stress our bodies would cease to be and we would die. Although stress is commonly thought of as an undesirable state, stress can be pleasant or unpleasant, while distress is always unpleasant. Recognition for an achievement, meeting an interesting person, or moving into a new home, are usually pleasant experiences in which the accompanying stress enhances a person's life. However, unpleasant experiences such as losing one's job, experiencing the death of a loved one, or become frustrated because one is unable to carry out some activity, almost always results in a distressful situation. While stress, pleasant or unpleasant, can stimulate a person to achieve greater excellence or overcome some difficulty that fills her with a sense of satisfaction and well-being, a high level of stress requiring an unusual amount of effort over a prolonged period of time may eventually lead to frustration and exhaustion, clearly a distressful experience.

For instance, the stress of getting to know a new class can motivate a teacher to remember names and quickly become familiar with individual student's interests and abilities, resulting in her feeling a sense of satisfaction which leads to positive teacher-student interactions. On the other hand if the teacher is thwarted in her efforts to get to know her class, she may experience distress.

Each teacher in the study experienced a degree of stress as she met her new class in September. For Patti and Caroline it was a low level of stress as they met with small groups of new students and began to establish rapport with the class and came to know and understand individual children. For Joy it was a high level of stress as she was faced with thirty new children all at once, with little opportunity to interact with them as individuals. She sensed there was a wide range of academic abilities, and visually she could see there was a wide range of cultural backgrounds that would likely mean more differences. Had Joy been able to get to know her children in the first few days, she would have experienced less uncertainty about what activities were appropriate for her class and what needs various individual children had. However, she also had to devote much of her attention to becoming familiar with school procedures and the grade two curriculum. As the days passed she began to experience frustration at not really knowing what skills individual children had and being unable to gear her lessons at appropriate levels for the range of abilities. With thirty children and the possibility of more, Joy's principal appeased her concern over her class size by indicating he would likely establish a new grade two/three split to relieve the pressure of numbers. Throughout September as new children arrived and some left, the proposed split was on one day and off the next. This added uncertainty further frustrated Joy as she struggled to become familiar with the curriculum, get to know the children, and develop a satisfactory level of classroom control. If part of her class was going to be transferred to another room in the next few days, on what should she spend her limited time? Which children would she have? Should she start a new unit, consider a new way of organizing her classroom, or should she adopt a holding pattern until a decision was made? While the proposed split promised a more manageable situation, the indecision and her powerlessness to have any effect on it made it difficult for Joy to formulate a clear plan of action. As the uncertainty continued, Joy experienced considerable distress. At times she wondered if the children were getting anything out of being at school. Joy believed her real strength was in working with small groups rather than with thirty at once, so she felt that if she could develop some learning centres this would free her to work with small groups and provide more individualized attention. She also hoped the centres would help provide for the diverse range of abilities and interests in her class. Initially she was frustrated in her attempts to create centres because she wasn't familiar enough with the grade two curriculum. However, as she became acquainted with the curriculum she realized she did not have enough room, time, or materials to develop centres that would engage her students in meaningful experiences. All fall, Joy seemed to be thwarted in her attempts to create the kind of learning environment that she believed in.

Although the principal assigned a half-time aide to work with Joy, this was one more new factor to consider. Now there was the added uncertainty of how to involve the aide in classroom activities. As they were unable to find time to plan together, Joy felt the aide was often merely supervising one group of students while she worked with another. Even though this temporarily relieved the numbers Joy had to interact with, she did not feel the children were benefiting as much as they might have. During the fall Joy experienced considerable frustration and exhaustion that eventually led to self-doubt. "Sometimes I really wonder if I'm in the right space. Maybe I'd be a lot better tutoring or something like that ..." (83.01.18) She never doubted her commitment to, and caring about children, but she did wonder at times if she would ever "get it all together." In January her conversations were punctuated with questions and negative feelings: "... have they learned anything? I'm not happy with my centres. I really wonder what the parents think about the reading program? ...sometimes I feel at such a loss..." There was little sense of accomplishment and achievement. The uncertainties of the fall had left her discouraged and ambivalent about returning to her class in January.

February seemed to bring a breakthrough for Joy. An imposed hospitalization in January gave her time to reflect on her teaching experiences. "I realize there's only so much I can do ... the important thing is that the children are trying and they know I'll help them..." Furthermore her love of literature and approach to reading finally had sparked an interest in authorship that resulted in a wealth of poems and stories from the students. Several learning centres appeared with small groups working earnestly at various activities. At last things seemed to "come together" and Joy began to feel a sense of satisfaction. Although the uncertainty of September through January had been a distressful time for Joy, she had not given up, but used it as a challenge and an opportunity for growth.

Caroline and Patti experienced a moderate amount of stress as they commenced their first school year. In Patti's case, her concern that the parents might think she was too young, merely stimulated her to ensure that she planned the best program she could and made her particularly aware of developing positive encounters with the parents. When Patti's student assistant put up a display that did not meet Patti's standards, she was initially uncertain what to do, but quickly decided she must be more explicit in her directions to aides so they understood what her expectations were. While Caroline experienced some anxiety over whether or not her kindergarten class would operate with as few as six, her uncertainty was soon put at ease by the principal. Caroline's concern over her first parent meeting resulted in her planning very carefully and inviting the principal to attend. In each of these cases, slight anxiety or stress caused the teachers to take special steps that contributed to their success. Patti soon felt she had the parents' respect, and Caroline was pleased with how her parent evening had gone. Stress can be valuable when it challenges a person to grow. Without stress, people easily become indifferent, apathetic and bored. While an optimal level of stress can be stimulating, a high level of stress experienced over a prolonged period of time, can lead to a sense of hopelessness that may eventually result in giving up.

Although both Patti and Caroline started the year full of excited anticipation, and used minor concerns and unexpected occurrences as a stimulant to grow and improve their way of handling situations, there came a point in Caroline's year when she felt she was expected to handle "too much change." At the beginning of the year she saw working with kindergarten through grade six children on Theme Days as a real challenge and an opportunity to get to know all the children in the school. However, when grade five was added to her teaching responsibility she began to feel overwhelmed. At first she created a learning environment similar to her kindergarten, where the grade five children could be involved in selecting what they would work at. When this did not seem to work, she quickly switched to total group activities. Feeling uncomfortable with this approach she requested some help which resulted in a visit to another grade five class with a very different approach. Caroline's uncertainty about what to do with her grade fives turned to a feeling of failure which caused her great distress. Added to this was a feeling of guilt about neglecting her kindergarten class, the death of her father, and a personal concern over her deteriorating marital relations. By February and March what had started out as an exciting challenge, had turned into an extremely stressful situation. She became depressed and very negative about herself and what she was doing. "I'm not meeting my ideals ... I feel rotten about myself ... I seem to be crying a lot ... I just don't care about my home, my husband, anything ..." Caroline was frequently ill and missing school. Her general health had deteriorated and her doctor and family were expressing concern. Each person has a different optimal stress level, and while some might have thrived under similar circumstances, clearly Caroline was reaching a breaking point. It may have been an unfortunate combination of distressful situations occurring simultaneously, or one may have triggered another in a domino effect. However, the uncertainty of her home situation coupled with the uncertainty and anxiety of her teaching situation, created a very distressful life world for Caroline.

While optimal stress can enhance a person's life and give greater meaning to it, distress can drain a person's energy and seriously jeopardize one's enjoyment of life and sense of well being. Both Caroline and Joy experienced high levels of distress that left them doubting their ability and worth. They began to question if they were providing good educational experiences for their students. At times they felt helpless to affect any change that would improve their situation and enable them to experience a sense of fulfillment. In his book *Stress Without Distress*, Seyle states:

> ... each of us must carefully analyze himself and try to find the particular stress level at which he feels most comfortable, whatever occupation he selects. Those who do not succeed in this analysis will either suffer the distress of having nothing worthwhile to do or of being constantly overtaxed by excessive activity. (1974, p. 68)

Many people accept Seyle's remedy for handling distress which places the responsibility totally on the individual. Although some people are able to handle stressful situations better than others, surely any valid solution for eliminating distress from people's lives should also examine the causes of distress and look for ways to alter high-level stress situations.

There is a fine line between experiencing a level of stress that enriches life by opening up whole realms of new possibilities, and experiencing a level of stress that causes a person to give up hope. Each new teacher's attitude towards life and its challenges is important in how she approaches stressful situations. On the other hand the situation she finds herself in also affects the amount of stress/distress she experiences. Large numbers of children, many unknowns, continual change, unrealistic or thwarted expectations of oneself, can all contribute to distress.

While it would not be desirable, nor possible, to remove all stress-producing situations from a new teacher's experiences, consideration must be given to the level of stress each new teacher is experiencing. Distress can lead to despair, whereas an optimal level of stress can encourage her to grow and move beyond her present mode of being in the world.

G. They Need Help, But What is Help?

While a dictionary definition of help includes "to give assistance, to aid, to support, sustain, succor, relieve," what was actually helpful to the three teachers in the study? In what ways did people attempt to provide help to these beginning teachers? When help was given, was it necessarily seen as helpful by those receiving it?

In 1978, Joseph Vaughn, Director of the National Institute for Education in the United States, made the following statement:

> The conditions under which a person carries out the first year of teaching have a strong influence on the level of effectiveness which that teacher is able to achieve and to sustain over the years; on the attitudes which govern teacher behaviour over even a forty-year career; and indeed, on the decision whether or not to continue in the teaching profession.

Vaughn's statement is indicative of a growing concern about new teachers' entry into their chosen career. It suggests that if this first year is *handled properly*, beginning teachers will be successfully launched into a long, happy and successful career. This prevailing attitude gives little thought to individual differences among beginning teachers. It assumes what is good for one beginning teacher will be good for all beginning teachers. Based on similar premises educational systems in many countries are developing programs to help beginning teachers during their first year. Teacher education institutions are questioning how they can best prepare teachers for that first year, while school boards are looking for the "best way" to orient new teachers to their system.

A study on beginning teachers reported by Felder (1979) suggested that "Employing educational institutions should consider the importance of providing well organized support systems..." (p. 17) For several years the Edmonton Public School Board has recognized the vulnerability of the beginning teacher and provided a number of activities designed to initiate them into the system. In addition to the extensive network of regular subject-oriented consultants available within the system, there were two half-time "New Teacher Consultants" as well as a number of special activities set up for the beginning teachers during the year of the study. The New Teacher Consultants held an orientation session for all beginning teachers prior to school opening, as well as a series of four small group sessions in different areas of the city. The consultants indicated they were available to individual teachers for classroom visits and could facilitate intervisitations upon requests from teachers.

On October 29, the School Board hosted a reception at an elegant downtown hotel for all teachers new to their system. After officially welcoming the teachers, board members and administrative staff mingled informally with the new teachers while partaking of hors d'oeuvres and wine. The following week the Edmonton Public School Local of the Alberta Teachers Association held a *Welcome for New Teachers* at Barnett House.

During the first part of the program various ATA officials brought greetings and shared how they could assist new teachers. Later a social hour was held including wine, cheese and home-made goodies. While all three teachers attended the orientation prior to school opening, there was little consistency in their pattern of attendance at subsequent functions. Caroline chose not to attend either of the official welcome sessions, Joy and Patti attended both. Patti felt they made you feel "part of the system" whereas Joy was somewhat resentful of "all the money spent on a fancy reception when there are so many things I could use it for in my class." Each teacher had different needs, so while the social welcomes helped Patti feel accepted and part of the system, Joy's need was not for acceptance but for some concrete help in her classroom, which was not met by a social function.

On September 17, a New Teacher Inservice for K-3 Teachers was held at the Early Childhood Education and Language Arts Resource Centre. The participants were grouped according to grade levels and met as a group with various consultants to discuss how things were going, review the language arts curriculum, become familiar with the Early Childhood Education resources available, and ask questions. There seemed to be a real willingness to share their experiences and several requested help from the consultants. Caroline felt the morning was "just great" and enjoyed a chance to meet with the consultants and other teachers. Joy's comment about the morning session was, "It's good timing. It was really good to get away from the class and hear the things they're saying." (82.09.17) While it was reassuring to Joy to find other beginning teachers were experiencing difficulty too, "getting away" from a very demanding group of children for half a day may have been the most helpful aspect of the inservice. From the written evaluations it appeared that Joy and Caroline's positive feelings were shared by many of those attending. On the other hand, Patti had chosen not to attend because of the timing. "I didn't want to leave my class. I think it's so important to establish routines with the kids..." She felt it was too early in the year to leave her class with someone else.

A second new teacher workshop on classroom management was held in mid-October. Again Joy found the timing good. "It came at a good time for me. It was a critical time as far as classroom management was concerned because I was still having trouble with my children." However, neither Caroline nor Patti felt any need to attend. In fact Patti and her buddy Sal, secretly thought it was "...pretty late. If one didn't have one's discipline established by then you would be in pretty bad shape!"

Obviously, it is nearly impossible to set system-wide inservices that are at the right time and on the right topic for more than a few teachers. What is critical to Teacher A is seen as irrelevant to Teacher B. What is too early for Teacher C is just right for Teacher B. However, there is more involved than timing and appropriateness of topics. Patti spoke of her commitment to her class and her reluctance to leave them with a substitute teacher. For her, this feeling persisted all year. Teaching is being with kids so how can it be helpful to abandon them? By taking the teacher away from her everyday lived world, an artificial situation was created. How much more pertinent the assistance might be if the consultants went to the classrooms to gain an understanding of what the teachers are experiencing and to discover what help would be appropriate.

While Patti was reluctant to leave her class with another teacher, both she and Joy spoke of the extra planning involved, and were not convinced any inservice was worth the hours of effort and planning required for a substitute teacher. On the other hand, if the inservice was planned for after school or an evening, they all felt they were either just too tired to benefit, or else had too much to do to take the time off. Even when a seminar or workshop might have provided a much needed break or a source of inspiration or encouragement, these beginning teachers often felt unable to take advantage of them due to their sense of responsibility to their classes.

Throughout the year there were four sessions planned especially for new teachers and numerous others planned in specific areas such as early childhood, language arts, et cetera. Each of the three teachers in my study attended a few, but rarely did they attend the same ones. Caroline seemed to prefer those offered specifically as Early Childhood Education sessions so she could keep abreast of current thoughts in the field and gather support for her belief in family grouping. Joy attended a couple on classroom management, because she felt she needed some help in that area, and then one in language arts because "that's my interest". Patti attended the fewest, and carefully chose those that gave her background in areas she didn't feel "on top of".

Joy found the inservice sessions to be "more refreshing breaks than support. I've valued the times I could get away. I think I did learn some things from the seminars ... I think everything I've gone to has been really worthwhile - both for the professional development and the break from the classroom and also from the kids." When speaking of the Teachers' Convention in February, Patti commented: "Every session confirmed that what I was doing was okay ... Some sessions were so elementary that it was really an insult ... I did get some new ideas." While all found the inservice sessions valuable, for Joy they were primarily seen as a "refreshing break", a chance to have a breather; for Patti, they were a means of reassuring her she was on the right track; and for Caroline they were an opportunity to keep in touch with like-minded educators. Each teacher took from the inservice sessions and workshops what she needed most at the time.

While the consultants were available to any teacher in the system, Caroline used their services most frequently; calling in a music consultant in the fall to give some suggestions for suitable kindergarten activities; and the language arts consultant in January when she was feeling overwhelmed with her grade five assignment. She had regular contact with the nurse and doctor regarding concerns related to her students. Caroline understood and felt comfortable with how the system worked, making frequent use of the assistance available. Most of the initiative seemed to come from her, and may be partly attributed to her extensive exposure to the system. "I'm familiar with the system. I know who the people are I can turn to." Joy did request a visit from one of the new teacher consultants, but after two or three cancellations, due to overriding commitments, the consultant's visit seemed anticlimatic when it finally took place. When someone needs help there is usually some immediacy about the need. Much as a drowning person needs help at the time, not later in the day or week, the new teacher usually needs someone who can respond quickly and with understanding to a plea for help. Unfortunately educational consultants frequently have so many responsibilities that they are unable to respond immediately. While this may force the teacher to work out some feasible plan of action in the interim, surely that is not the role of the consultant. Although Patti and Caroline did not request a visit from the early childhood consultant, both found her unsolicited visit to their kindergarten classes very reassuring and positive - "a pat on the head".

Intervisitations[41] were suggested at the September orientation meeting as a useful opportunity to "talk to other teachers who are doing similar things". In the fall Joy was quite anxious to see how other teachers were handling grade two. Although she inquired to her principal about such a visit, nothing ever happened. "I guess it just slipped his mind". Joy was so busy trying to cope that she didn't bother to pursue it. At the suggestion of the language arts consultant, Caroline made a visit to another grade five class which "...just blew my mind. Everything went like clockwork. It wasn't my style at all." Because she was already insecure in what she was doing with her grade fives, this visit reinforced her feeling of failure and she feared she must be on the wrong track. Although she made some attempts to change, she felt so uncomfortable playing a role that she didn't believe in, she soon went back to her more relaxed, child oriented approach. When Caroline tried to take on the super-efficient-worksheet-oriented role she felt herself merely an object giving out orders which the students automatically followed. In this role she felt unable to respond to the students as individuals with special needs and interests. Unamuno, a Spanish philosopher of education, speaks of the importance of "education for the authentic humanness of the individual person." For him "the only education worth having is the kind in which one ceases to be a guinea pig and enters upon the path of knowing himself as a unique and irreplacable person." (in Denton, p. 91). Caroline seems to share Unamuno's belief in education as a touching of souls. Because the consultant had so highly recommended a model that was very different from Caroline's philosophy, it not only made her question her own belief system, but left her experiencing a sense of failure. While we must constantly question our own beliefs and practises if we are to continue to grow and change, to be left on her own to do this in her first year was very threatening for Caroline. A visit to a second grade five class where the teacher interacted differently with her students might have been reassuring to Caroline at that point, or at least to have had an opportunity to discuss the visit with someone who understood what she was trying to do and yet was open to a variety of teaching styles. In this way she could have been helped to reflect on various ways of interacting with children as well as being given some reassurance that she was not a failure.

---

[41] Intervisitations are visits made by one teacher to another classroom, usually at the same grade level, to provide her an opportunity to observe and discuss a colleague's teaching style and methods.

Within each school there was an informal support system. Each of the three teachers mentioned the early and continuing support of their principals, while two commented on the support of the staff in general. All of the principals popped in and out of the classrooms frequently to bring information, see how things were going and just to keep in touch. As Jim Ayres said "If I'm there every day that gives Patti a chance to bring up anything that's bothering her." It also gave him a chance to see what was happening in her classroom. He went a step further in having four "pit stops" with each teacher on his staff to review how things were going in each class, provide feedback to them as well as an opportunity for staff to discuss concerns and/or ideas. "With a large staff this ensures I keep in touch with everyone." Even though there was a great deal of ongoing communication among all the staff at Autumn Leaf, Betty used to check in often with Caroline "to see if she had any questions and to ensure that she understood procedures." She also provided a steady stream of written notes and cards commenting on interesting events and activities in Caroline's room. Although the ongoing contact provided by the principals was interpreted as support and interest by Patti and Caroline, this contact also provided the principals with an opportunity to check if school rules and procedures were being carried out. Lortie's (1977) sociological study of teachers revealed that the principal's main objective is to ensure that the school runs smoothly. While the principals in the present study all seemed to care about their staff, especially their new teachers, each of them did make decisions that were more supportive of the school as a whole than of their new teacher. Principals must experience considerable tension at times between being caring, nurturing individuals on one hand, and hard-nosed efficient administrators on the other. Sensing Joy's exhaustion and frustration, Joy's principal Ray frequently relieved her for ten or fifteen minutes so she could have a cup of tea and recoup her strength. As he had assured Joy, "he would be supportive in whatever way he could." During the early weeks Joy often took "difficult" children to the principal where they jointly worked out a plan of action. As Joy and Ray shared the same religious affiliation, Joy had an underlying feeling that he was a "good, decent human being that she could count on" for emotional support even though she found his delaying tactics over splitting her class very frustrating. Each of the teachers sensed they had the genuine support of their principal for what they were doing in their classrooms. Sometimes this was reinforced through verbal comments, while at other times it was because they did not question why they were doing something.

Both Joy and Caroline felt they were in supportive situations. "The whole staff is very supportive ... There's a different atmosphere from other schools ... little things - like someone will bring you a cup of tea when you're working in your classroom." (Caroline) Things they found supportive were when other staff members took an interest in them, cared about what they were doing and how they were feeling, shared ideas, relieved them of supervision if they were not feeling well, gave them feedback that assured them their ideas were worthwhile. Although Caroline found the staff "very supportive", being part of a small staff resulted in some pressure too. "Everyone has to get along when there are only four." When the staff was off for a two day retreat in January, Caroline expressed some uneasiness, "I'm a little concerned about being together for twenty-four hours that opposing views might make for a very tense situation." Later when she was depressed over her grade fives and her deteriorating marriage, she confided "I even hate to go to the staff room cause I know people pick up on things ... I don't like people to see me depressed and irritable." While on one hand she had a tremendous need for the sympathy and nurturing the staff provided for her, she experienced conflict in that she believed her personal feelings should not interfere with her professional role. As Caroline could not keep her personal feelings hidden from her colleagues she preferred to withdraw rather than to face possible "exploitation" in the sense that Greene speaks of.. While Greene speaks of this in relation to a teacher and her students, her words seem equally relevant to a teacher / staff situation.

> In the classroom, as in the wider world, individuals clearly live with others, share certain agreements, engage in cooperative action in domains ranging from baseball to theoretical science. But living and working with others is not the same as living authentically together. And because authentic living together can never be passive, it involves great tension and risk. Once two beings are open to each other there can be a calling out of one another into "being"; but there can also be exploitation of one by the other, the tendency to "look" coldly and from without, to make the other feel himself to be an object or a thing. (1967, p. 52)

So while a small staff who know each other intimately can be very supportive, this situation may also be more threatening at times than a large, impersonal one such as Alnwick. If the individuals are living together authentically they are open and honest, critical and assuring. While it can nurture the realization of one's potential, it can also leave one exposed and vulnerable.

For Patti and Caroline the two formal evaluations by their principals served as a source of support. They saw them as important indicators that they were doing a good job. "It was like a midterm at University. If you get a good mark you know you're on the right track." Even though Joy had also received a positive evaluation from her principal it was not particularily significant to her. "The successes of the children are my successes." When the children were excited about their accomplishments this provided support for Joy.

In reviewing the literature on beginning teachers, Castle (1980) found that a "buddy" system is often helpful to the successful settling in of a new teacher. Essentially the "buddy system" is assigning an experienced teacher to the neophyte to "serve as a resource person, role model and counsellor." (Castle, p. 19) There may be variations on this model. Southwell (1970) describes an "orientation committee" of three teachers to be involved with the new teacher from the initial interview through the intervening time until school starts, and continuing through the first year. While an experienced teacher could certainly be helpful in guiding the new teacher to reflect on what she was doing, in giving assurance that her ideas were worthwhile, as well as in presenting alternatives to consider; this kind of help requires an understanding of the new teacher's plans, methods and aspirations. There must be genuine communication.

For two of the teachers in the study a "buddy" was assigned by the principal. In Joy's case it was the teacher who had taught grade two the previous year, while for Patti it was the "other" kindergarten teacher. Each "buddy" was familiar with the school and the level the neophyte was teaching, but in neither case did they seem to provide the role model and counselling suggested by Castle. Joy acknowledged that her buddy had "lent materials and showed me where to get things", while Patti readily admitted "the other teacher was really helpful and shared lots of ideas." However, Joy and Patti both had definite ideas of how they wanted to organize their program and relate to "their children" which were quite different from those of their "buddies". Due to many joint activities in the kindergarten, Patti and her buddy Marj were continually in contact and forced to make mutual decisions. Almost immediately, Patti realized their philosophies were very different and while she was willing to compromise on a few points, there were many on which she would not. It was difficult for Patti to develop a feeling of trust towards a person whose beliefs about children and working with them were so different to hers. Even though Patti outwardly said it was "fine for her (buddy) to work that way," she knew she could never accept many of her buddy's practices nor teach like her, so she unconsciously maintained a distance between them. Although it was helpful to have an experienced colleague to turn to, she feared it could easily be transformed into a subtle pressure to do it the way the experienced teacher had found workable. If we are sincerely concerned about each new teacher creating her own reality, we need to provide support carefully. There is a very fine line between supporting a person to "become" a teacher in her own way, and supporting them to "become" the kind of teacher the professor, the principal or the "teaching buddy" thinks she should be. Although an "assigned buddy" did not seem to benefit Patti or Joy, they both felt there was merit to the idea. Joy commented "... if she'd said 'That looks like a really good inservice. Let's go together.' maybe I'd have gone to more." Earlier she had mentioned how she appreciated the principal going with her to the Alberta Teachers Association Welcome Night, "You didn't have to stay with him, but if you were feeling uncomfortable you could always sidle up to him ..." Within the school, Joy felt she could go to any of the staff for help, so perhaps the important role a buddy might have played for her would be to gently pull her away from the school into the larger educational context. In discussing how a human being becomes herself, Greene (1967) says:

> ... the possibilities among which the person must choose are contingent in many ways on the social order; and the struggle to be is in part a struggle against society's tendency to make an "object" out of the individual ... p. 42)

If help is given without considering the needs of the individual to be helped, there is a danger of treating the person like an object. Unless the buddy feels some commitment to the new teacher, who in turn feels she can trust the buddy to have her interests at heart, there can be little authentic help.

For Patti, the other new teacher at the school became her "unofficial buddy." They had experienced a similar orientation in their University Teacher Education Program, but most importantly, they were "going through exactly the same kind of things." They were both new to the taken-for-granted operation of the school, they both were very busy, and they both wondered "are we ever going to fit in?" This informal "buddy relationship" between the two new teachers was much more supportive than the structured "buddy" system. After all, it was less threatening to admit to another neophyte that you had doubts, did not get something done or found someone on staff totally unreasonable, than to share these concerns and doubts with someone who seemed to have everything under control and might judge you as incompetent.

At Autumn Leaf, with a staff of only four teachers, everyone quickly got to know each other and Caroline found everyone very helpful. However, within the first few days Mary, the grade three / four teacher, became Caroline's "unofficial buddy." Mary was a warm, supportive person who was familiar with kindergarten/primary children and the curriculum expectations. She took a special interest in Caroline both as a person and as a beginning teacher, and was there to give Caroline encouragement and assurance when she needed it. These two teachers shared a similar philosophical orientation to working with children. They often drove to school together, and constantly shared ideas and expectations for how they could make education more appropriate and exciting for the children they worked with. In Caroline's words "Every first year teacher should have a warm, positive, sweet teacher like Mary for a buddy." Unfortunately, Mary was away on maternity leave after Christmas when Caroline was experiencing difficulty in finding a suitable approach to her grade fives. While it is relatively easy to be supportive and reassuring of someone when they are experiencing success, it is much more challenging to provide appropriate support to someone who is experiencing failure. Would Mary have been able to help Caroline reflect on what she was doing and reveal new ways of approaching the situation? Surely real help is when one is pushed/prodded/encouraged to find one's own answers and fulfil one's own potential.

If one were to credit voluntary comments as more significant than the solicited responses, for Patti, the most important support came from the other new teacher at the school, a continuing relationship with the researcher, and the belief that the principal did care what was happening in her room. In each case Patti trusted "the other person" and felt they were interested in her as a human being, willing to share in her joys and her concerns, and was there on a regular basis. For Caroline, one is left with "every first year teacher should have a warm, positive sweet teacher like Mary for a buddy" along with Caroline's feelings towards her principal "She is one hundred percent supportive - she never overwhelms or overburdens, and I feel I could talk to her about anything."

However, when Caroline seemed to need support most, Mary was away and Caroline was beginning to doubt whether it was wise for her to share her frustrations and resentment towards teaching grade five with her principal. Support for Joy came from the feeling that her principal believed in what she was doing, as well as from the growing sense of responsiveness and accomplishments of her students. In each case important support came from those who had taken an interest in each teacher as an individual human being and were there when they needed them.

Each of the three teachers seemed to seek and obtain support in her own unique way. As a researcher I probed into this aspect of their first year more than any other. From my reading of the literature and my own experience, I believed this to be a crucial feature in how successfully a new teacher becomes established in her profession. Although each of the neophytes sought out what she felt she needed to help her become the teacher she believed she really could be, the help she received was not always helpful. Berman and Roderick (1977) note in *Curriculum: Teaching The What, How and Why of Living*:

> Because persons want and need the conditions for growth, expansion, and constant remaking, they tend to interact with persons, ideas and institutions so that the self can be enhanced. They tend to want surroundings, places, organizations - a social context - which contribute to their well being. (p. 7)

While many of the "laid on" inservices and formal arrangements were pleasant, they did not seem to "contribute to their well being." They did not provide a personal involvement in the particular needs and apprehensions of the individual teacher. When Caroline was wrestling with her new grade five assignment, the consultant sent her off to "visit a super grade five teacher" without taking time to find out how Caroline was experiencing difficulty and what she was really trying to do. Likewise, when Joy was struggling to come to terms with her grade two assignment, several staff members offered to take her class for fifteen or twenty minutes to give her a break. While Joy appreciated their offer, it was not giving her the help she needed. "It would be nice to have the break, but what the kids really need is some work on math concepts." One of the things she found most helpful was having access to the school so she could go there to plan and prepare for her class whenever she wanted. This enabled her to be sensitive to her husband's schedule and plan to do her work at times when he was at the University studying. While he was understanding of her need to feel prepared and ready for school she did not want to undermine their relationship by neglecting him.

When people offer to help others, they need to consider carefully what help means, who they are helping, and what kind of help is needed if they are to avoid the unfortunate results of the following nature lover.

> "The butterfly is a beautiful and active creature. In its process of metamorphosis, it emerges from the pupa. It puts up a tremendous struggle to break out of its chitinous shell.
>
> A nature lover, once noticing this, thought that the creature should be saved the struggle. With great dexterity, he used a scalpel to cut away the shell. Then the butterfly emerged without a struggle.
>
> But it was lame; it could not fly..."
>
> (Source unknown)

Perhaps help should be offered only if we take time to know and understand the creature we are attempting to help. Then we may be less apt to interrupt the necessary struggle of becoming.

H. Experiencing Time Within the World of Doing

The teachers in the study saw time very much as a commodity. Each day had twenty-four hours, each week had seven days, each month had approximately four weeks and the school term had ten months. How could they make use of this time in the best possible way? How could they accomplish the most within a given period of time? Everything they had to do, like keeping attendance, filling out forms, planning activities, seemed to take so much time and effort. Throughout the fall term each of the three teachers expressed this sentiment over and over. "There's never enough time to really get on top of things. If I work on centres, there's no time for long range planning. If I make games there's little time to think about my daily plans. If I spend all day Saturday shopping for school materials, there's little time to clean my house. If I try to do all I think I should be doing, I don't have time for my family, or my friends." While many educators experience a lack of time throughout their careers, the beginning teacher is especially vulnerable. The many procedures that are taken for granted by an experienced teacher, require time to become familiar with them as well as time to do them. There are so many clerical and procedural things to attend to in addition to teaching responsibilities. However,the prevailing attitude in schools is that if they are to run smoothly, everyone must conform to clock time restraints, and little allowance can be made for the new teacher to have extra time to become familiar with all those bewildering procedures. Often the only way a new teacher can survive is to stay late and come in early.

If you have ever been at a three-ring circus, you will have some idea of how the beginning teachers in the study felt. Remember how you just became totally engrossed in the events of one ring when those of another caught your attention and drew you away from the first. Then ring three commanded your attention. What should have been an exhilarating experience turned into one of frustration. There is just not enough time to take everything in and you are left pulled in many directions. Similarly, a beginning teacher may just begin to plan her program when she realizes that she must come to understand her children better if she is to plan suitable experiences. As she switches her attention to getting to know her class,a memo from the office reminds her of a meeting, a parent conference, or some clerical task to be done. How difficult it is to find enough time to keep every "ring" running smoothly. She feels pulled in many directions and finds it hard to accomplish all those things educators must do.

In an essay on "Time and Education", Troutner speaks of the significance of time for education. He believes time is a built-in characteristic of man's lived reality involving three temporal moments: past, present and future. Historically man lived in "anticipation of the future in the light of the past and the application of present effort to future ends." He feels mankind, particularly in North America, has moved to a contemporary meaning of time which Heidegger would call "the inauthentic mode." "In its simplest formulation this means living time as a succession of now moments, a temporal mode that is best illustrated by the movements of the clock..." Rather than conquering the world, he fears man has been "taken over by the world of technique and machines..." (in Denton, 1974:161) As Troutner looks at the relation of time to education, he suggests that how time is handled in the school classroom is very important to how a child becomes a person and ultimately how he sees himself in the world. Schools are very governed by clock time; classes start and end at specific times, lunch is eaten between certain hours, physical activity is relegated to "gym time". Even if a teacher wishes to devote some uninterrupted time to getting to know her students, there is rarely an opportunity, for fire drills, recess, and library time constantly interfere. The day is divided into time slots and one of the teacher's responsibilities is to see that the school's timetable is adhered to and certain tasks completed on schedule.

In *Erosion of Childhood*, Suransky considered the relation of "institutional time" to the child's own personal lived-time. Upon observing children in a nursery program, she found that the children's own experience of lived time is systematically imposed upon by institutional constraints..." (1982, p. 66) Similarly, a beginning teacher must learn to conform to the institutional constraints which are largely taken for granted by those teachers already established in the system. Even though each school develops its own unique pattern of time demands, all schools must conform to some culturally regulated time constraints. Jules Henry (1971) speaks of unbound and bound time, with the latter referring to time "sold to the job. Sold time is bound and governed by fear" (p. 14) while unbound time is thought of as leisure. Once a graduating student signs a contract with a school board, she has agreed to accept certain responsibilities and specific time constraints in return for her salary. Initially each of the teachers in the study experienced difficulty getting everything done in the time available to them. Their lives were almost completely taken over by "bound time" with little opportunity to experience unbound, or leisure time.

Each teacher struggled with time in different ways. From the commencement of school, Patti consciously attempted to set aside time for herself. "If I work late all week, then I should be able to take the weekends off." She frequently reiterated this statement as though to convince herself of its validity. Even though she was most adamant about insuring she have time for herself, she too found her weekends encroached upon. "I spent all day Saturday looking for games."

Although Caroline had chosen a half-time position so she would have "afternoons to prepare and evenings free for my husband," she soon found herself "working in the evenings too." Not only did she spend her evenings on school work, but her weekends as well. In November she commented, "I took last Sunday off and suffered all week. There were all kinds of little things that I hadn't gotten done." It was important to Caroline to have every detail worked through and every activity prepared perfectly. She demanded much of herself and experienced frustration when anything thwarted her ability to "give it her all". She found it difficult to provide an answer for her husband when he asked why she was unable to get prepared "for her two and one half hours of teaching in the other five and one half hours she spent at the school each day?" When one is striving for perfection, it seems one can always improve things just a little bit more. For Caroline, as for Joy and Patti, perfection was doing things in the very best way she was able to do it in a given time. It is difficult to say, "this will have to do" when you know your chart would really look better if you added some pictures to it or printed it again. Just before Christmas when Caroline took over the grade fives, she temporarily accepted less than perfection from herself out of necessity. "I'm so tired I'm just letting them go to it. If it had been the beginning of the year I'd really have to watch myself. I'd have been charging ahead and doing it all myself." In January she stated, "I guess I just have to realize I can't be a perfect teacher this year - perfect in terms of how much I do and how well I do it." Although she knew it was not realistic to expect perfection of herself under the circumstances, with a kindergarten class, a grade five class and a family grouping every Thursday, it was her nature to devote all her time and energy to things that interested and were important to her. Teaching children was very important to her. As she came to know the grade five students, her commitment to them increased and so did the amount of time she spent preparing for them. Caroline had difficulty pacing herself and she would go from euphoric highs to complete exhaustion that required a few days of rest to recuperate. By the end of the year, Caroline's doctor was concerned about her health and Caroline planned to do nothing related to school for the entire summer.

Both Patti and Caroline had known their placements in the spring and had spent considerable time over the summer readying their classrooms and preparing materials. On the other hand, Joy didn't know her placement until September 1. Initially, Joy found herself overwhelmed with all the things she had to do - become familiar with curriculum, organize her classroom space, get to know the children, plan lessons/activities for the next day, locate supplies, get to know staff, and do long range planning. As we discussed possible differences had she known her placement earlier in the summer, she commented that it would have made things easier, however,

> It's probably a good thing I didn't know about my job til last minute. At least we (Joy and her husband) had holidays in August and spent quite a bit of time doing things together. If I'd known earlier I'd probably have taken along a car full of guidebooks and still been as busy this fall. Since the long weekend in September we've hardly seen each other." (82.12.01)

For both Caroline and Joy it was as though the task at hand expanded into the maximum time available. At one point Joy commented, "I guess maybe that's just me. It doesn't matter how much time I've got, I'll use it. If I have twenty hours I'll use it. If I've only got ten hours I'll use it." Joy did try to arrange her evening work so she could spend some time with her husband, but "he spent most of his evenings studying anyway" so she didn't experience a lot of guilt if she had to work late or go back to school after supper. Even though in January Caroline resolved to be home by 6:30 to get supper, she often spent the entire evening on"school work", and rarely felt she could take time to do things with her husband. Patti managed to keep Friday evenings and much of the weekend free for herself right from September but felt guilty if she took any evenings off during the week. By January she was able to arrange her work so she could take one or two evenings off. Right from September Patti was much more capable of finding time for herself so she could maintain some balance between social and professional involvement in her life. It was important to Patti to have time to do things that were just for her. However, it was not without effort. In November she expressed the two low points in her year to that time as having to accept less than perfect of herself, and her difficulty in finding time for herself. On the other hand Caroline's whole existence, and to some extent Joy's, seemed to revolve around teaching.

What is it that enabled Patti to pace herself in a way that Joy and Caroline did not? Certainly it was not less commitment to her job, for Patti was devoted to her classes. However, early in the year Patti stated a need to have some time for herself. If she were to continue teaching for a large part of her life, she felt it was important to enjoy it and do it well, but it was also important to have a satisfactory personal life as well. "I think I owe it to myself." Being single Patti was only answerable to herself, whereas Caroline and Joy had husbands to consider. While Patti could establish work times and play times and assume her boyfriend would "just have to understand," this attitude was undoubtedly less acceptable to a married spouse, so Caroline and Joy had to remain more flexible in their use of time. Early in the year Patti considered the tasks that she had to do, and those someone else could do. "I'm not going to spend my time cutting and tracing. I can get someone else to do this. I'd be making better use of my time planning educational experiences." (82.10.18) Although she started to involve the school aide, a work experience student, and some parents in preparing and displaying materials, it wasn't always easy to accept how they were done. "It's not the way I would do it so it's hard to accept, but I have to. You want everything to be perfect; at least the way you think is perfect." (82.11.03) However, Patti seemed to reason: "If I do it all myself, then I have no time for me. If I get other people to do things, I have to be prepared to accept it the way they do it. If I don't, they will not continue to help. Well, I guess I can live with less than perfect." On the other hand, Caroline wanted to retain control over how materials and activities were prepared. By making them herself she could insure they were as close to perfect as possible. Even though she sensed the grade fives' excitement in organizing and decorating their own classroom, she still went ahead and made the curtains over the Christmas holidays. "They wanted to make the curtains but I ended up making them over the holidays because I was a little concerned about them cutting the material the wrong way..." (83.01.04) Caroline found it difficult to delegate authority. If she did it herself, she knew it was done, even if it took her all weekend.

All fall Joy found she was so busy coming to terms with all her own responsibilities that she didn't have much time to consider how someone else could help her. For a couple of months Joy had an aide working with her, however, she never felt she was able to get far enough ahead in her own planning or do joint planning to make really good use of the aide. Although there were volunteer parents who were willing to help out in the school, Joy saw problems associated with involving them too. "I'd need to spend time with those Moms so they'd know what to do. If I have to think up ideas and make samples, I might as well make the materials myself." (82.10.12) If time was merely seen as a commodity, someone else's time should be as useful as one's own time, however, this was not so with the teachers in the study. They experienced a personal commitment to what had to be done, and found it difficult to involve others in doing tasks they felt responsible for. Could anyone else be trusted to get it just right? The beginning teachers in the study tended to be very idealistic and this resulted in their never being satisfied with their performance. Initially, Patti felt it was possible to get things perfect if only she could spend enough time at it. However, as the year progressed, she came to realize that no matter how well things were going, there was always the potential for a more interesting or better way to do it. Just as Patti had come to accept that certain things could wait for next year, so did Joy. In January she commented:

> I'm just feeling a lot more relaxed with the school, the classroom and everything now, so in a way maybe things will slow down a bit. Although I think my goals have always been so high that maybe they're hard to achieve... Everybody tells me I work way too hard and that things will still be okay tomorrow if I don't do all that work tonight. I think I'm coming to accept that. (83.01.18)

Although Caroline verbalized a similar sentiment, she never seemed to really accept it.

There are some important considerations emerging from the experiences of these three beginning teachers.

Each of them was initially overwhelmed with all the things she had to do and how much time they all took. There was a tendency for each of them to spend all the time she had on school work in an effort to get things as close to perfect as she could. Patti seemed most able to set some priorities related to her own personal well being. Even though she did not often accomplish it, she tried hard to keep her weekends for herself. If she were able to give her best to teaching Monday through Friday, she had to feel rested and rejuvenated through setting aside time to do things for herself, whether it be riding her horse, going out with her boyfriend, planning a party for friends or just sleeping.

After taking a weekend off from school work to do Christmas shopping and go out with her husband, Caroline admitted she felt a lot more rested and ready to face the week. Even though she experienced some advantage in taking a complete break from school related activities, she seemed either unable or unwilling to do it on a regular basis.

As Joy became more comfortable with her class and the curriculum, she began to take more time off on the weekends and began participating in aerobics at lunch time. First Patti, and eventually Joy, sensed they would have more to offer their students if they took time to experience some of the joys and satisfactions of living.

For as Cunningham so eloquently states in her poem:

Day by day the child comes to know
a little bit of what you know,
to think a little bit of what you think,
to understand your understanding.
That which you dream and believe and *are*,
in truth, becomes the child. (1979, p. 18)

A teacher's first year requires a great deal of preparation, along with considerable thought about the classroom reality she is creating. Is it reasonable to expect beginning teachers to establish work patterns that enable them to have both a satisfying personal and professional life? It seemed possible for Patti. She approached the year feeling a balance within her personal and professional life was important, so she was determined to make it happen. Once she felt established, she assessed her situation and decided there were certain tasks she must carry out, but many others that could be done by someone else. She actively sought out sources of assistance and quickly learned that she must be accepting of volunteers efforts if they were to continue helping her.

Why was Patti able to do this when Joy and Caroline were not? I feel there is no simple answer. As Joy's experience indicated, a teacher first must have a clear idea of what she is doing, and then time to sit down and share her expectations and requirements with aides or volunteers. For a teacher to effectively share her plans with other adults, she must have a high degree of confidence that they will work. For an inexperienced teacher this is a formidable task. Even before school started, both Patti and Caroline had done their long-range planning and worked with kindergarten age children before. One might expect they both could have translated their plans to others with equal ease, but still Caroline did not choose to involve others in helping her. Perhaps she feared their standards would not meet hers, or possibly she never really came to terms with which things she had to do and which might have been delegated.

As teachers begin their professional careers, there *are* a lot of things to do, and there *never seems to be enough time* to do them all. Each of the three teachers in the study were striving for perfection - mostly for their own self-fulfillment, but partly because of the tight job market. Would any first-year teacher *less than perfect* be offered a continuous contract?

As neophyte teachers enter the field, is it realistic that they should expect to attain perfection that very first year? Does this force them into a frenzied pace of activity and work that may result in them being burned out within a few years. Much of the literature on burnout shows that it is most often the dedicated, committed teacher who suffers from this malady.

It may partly be the beginning teacher's unrealistic view of what is really possible, but I feel the situation they find themselves in adds to this unrealistic expectation. Patti was expected to be "just as good as" the other kindergarten teacher who'd been teaching five or six years. Joy was expected to cope with a large, extremely diverse class.

Caroline was expected to adjust to a new group of students at an unfamliar age level along with her kindergarten class and theme group. Certainly their principals, and some staff members were conscious of their neophyte status and assisted them in many ways. However, generally new teachers are expected by staff, students and parents to do as well as the experienced teacher. They are expected to use their time and skills just as efficiently as experienced teachers so the school will continue to run smoothly and children will subtly learn to cope with "clock time" as they engage in their studies. Is it possible then, to urge first year teachers to have realistic expectations of themselves, even if they are less than perfect; to pace themselves so they only do so much this year and leave some of those "neat ideas" to try next year; to reserve time for themselves so they remain healthy, happy and enthusiastic? Should administrators and counsellors be picking up teachers in their first year who are "at risk" of burning themselves out? Is it possible to help first year teachers stop being so busy "doing things", that they can take time to start being themselves? Until teachers can experience teaching as a way of living, of being with children, rather than merely focusing on all the things they must do within a given day, week, or year, they will continue to experience time in an "inauthentic mode".

In *Teaching as Being: The Right to Personhood*, Beverley Cunningham explores the difference between "teaching as doing and teaching as being". Although she used to think of teaching "as *doing* certain things well, " her experience and reflection has resulted in her seeing it more as a way of experiencing or being." I realize that it is how I experience the subject matter, my students, my colleagues and myself in the classroom that is ultimately communicated to, and learned by, my students." (1979, p. 2) If a teacher is to communicate a joy for learning and living to her students, then she herself must experience those things in her life. If she does not take her own personal needs into account she will be a less effective teacher in the long run.

> Far from being an opting out of responsibility, this stance assumes the total responsibility that comes with this kind of assertion of personhood: I have a right to experience myself as a human being in the classroom. I teach what I am and what I experience. (1979, p. 2)

As long as teachers experience time as a commodity, with so many things to do in a set period of time, they are in danger of seeing "teaching as doing" rather than "teaching as a mode of being".

V. SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

A. Summary

As a teacher educator who has spent several years working with senior undergraduate early childhood education students, the researcher had often pondered over what it was like for students as they left the Faculty of Education and began their teaching careers. What experiences did these beginning teachers have? What meaning did they give to their experiences? The present study was designed to answer these questions by focusing on three early childhood graduates as they commenced teaching. In June, Patti was assigned to teach two kindergarten classes in a four-year-old suburban school with a full-time staff of twenty-five; also in June Caroline decided to accept a half-time position teaching one kindergarten class in a small old inner-city school with a full-time staff of five; on the evening of September 1, Joy was assigned to a grade two class in a new suburban school with a staff of eight. Each of the teachers had graduated from the early childhood program at the University of Alberta the previous spring.

If the researcher were going to uncover the meaning these teachers were to give to their experiences, it seemed imperative to use a research approach that would enable the researcher to not only describe the observable experiences, but delve into the underlying meaning. Ethnographic methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, and field-work did enable the researcher to get close to the data and develop thick descriptive portrayals of each teachers' observable world. In order to gain an understanding of each teacher's unique experience, the researcher made weekly visits to each classroom over a six month period. Contact was maintained with the teachers for a further six months through informal meetings, interviews, and occasional visits to the classroom. As the researcher interpreted and portrayed the teacher's experiences throughout the year, certain feelings and experiences surfaced over and over as emergent themes in each teacher's life world. As themes emerged, the researcher's role shifted from one of primarily observing, discussing and recording, to one of questioning, clarifying and further interpreting. Sometimes what was very important for one teacher did not hold much importance for another. However, a number of themes like struggle for control, someone cares, and there's never enough time were relevant to each of the three teachers in the study. In addition to exploring these themes with the teachers, the researcher went to the literature to discover what meaning these topics had for others. Although each theme will continually remain open to further interpretation by the researcher and others, they have been presented to the reader at this time. As individuals read and test them against their own experiences, the researcher trusts they will be both believable, and reveal something new about the reality of a beginning teacher's life world.

Chapter Three provided descriptive portrayals of the experiences of Joy, Caroline and Patti during their first year of teaching. Each of them read "her story" and accepted it as describing it "the way it was". These portrayals became the stepping off points for exploring the meaning Joy, Caroline and Patti were giving to their experiences. As themes began to emerge from the teachers' experiences, the researcher focused on these in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning teachers gave to them. Through reflecting on the meaning of the teachers' experiences, and reading in related literature, the researcher developed seven themes which are submitted as insights into what beginning teachers experience as they move into their first position as an early childhood teacher. The themes portrayed in Chapter Four are: The Beginning Teacher as Stranger: from Student to Teacher; I'm a Real Teacher At Last; Someone Cares; Struggle for Control; Uncertainty Can Lead to Distress; They Need Help, But What is Help?' and Experiencing Time Within the World of Doing.

In addition to describing and exploring the meaning of the first year teacher's experiences, the researcher was also searching for a research approach that would enable her to delve sensitively into the life world of individuals. In this chapter the researcher reflects upon the appropriateness of the approach used, and comments on what the study has meant to her as a teacher educator.

B. Reflections on the Study

The Research Topic

Throughout the years I have been involved in teacher education, the question "what is it like to be a beginning teacher of young children" has arisen in my mind over and over. I have often felt that we, at the University, are very unrealistic when we expect, or at least hope, our graduating students will go into the field and transform their classrooms into rich learning environments for young children where the focus is on the experiences of the child rather than the schedule. Even while I had doubts that this was feasible, I realized I did not understand all that was involved in a new teacher's first year. Educators, the media and current literature on children and society, all claimed that children and the times were changing. Expectations of teachers were changing. Just how would beginning teachers in the eighties experience their first year? How could I come to a better understanding of what they were experiencing and the meaning they were giving to those experiences? As I embarked on my study I was convinced it would be a meaningful experience for me. What surprised and pleased me as I presented my proposal to a graduate seminar and discussed it with colleagues, both in the field and in teacher education, was the interest in and assurance that it was an important area to investigate. Principals commented, "This is one study I'm going to read," and teacher educators claimed, "It's time someone really looked at that first year. It's a very crucial time to our students." Several times during the study I was asked to speak to groups of fourth year students who were keenly interested in what was happening in the lives of my subjects. It was gratifying to discover that my study was not only a topic important to me, but to others in the field of education as well.

I chose to focus on only three beginning teachers so I could delve more deeply into the meaning each teacher was giving to her own unique experience. From this in-depth study I was able to gain insights into these teachers' experiences that are often overlooked when one looks for the commonalities among groups. For instance although many of the research studies dealing with first year teachers [Castle (1980), Southwell (1970), Tisher (1979)] recommend providing assistance for beginning teachers, I found that even the best-intended assistance was not necessarily helpful to the teachers in my study. The things that were most helpful were those that took each teacher into consideration as a unique human individual. Just as educators encourage teachers to get to know individual children's interests, abilities and problems so they can plan appropriate activities, so should consultants, principals and professors, if they are to be truly helpful, get to know and understand the interests, abilities and problems of each individual beginning teacher.

Because I believed it was important for my study to reveal how the teacher was experiencing her year, I selectively looked only at the beginning teacher's perspective of her first year. I did not explore what the principal, or staff or children might have portrayed, for if the beginning teacher believed it was a certain way, then for her that was reality.

I began my study with some anticipation and much excitement. As I came to know the three teachers and share in their experiences, my understanding of them and of teaching in general grew considerably. As I tentatively probed into the meaning of their experiences I was humbled, yet encouraged, by the trust they placed in me and their willingness to share their experiences. Indeed, at times they seemed to have a need to share their experiences with some outsider that they could trust. As themes emerged from their experiences I explored these with the teachers to discover what deeper meaning they held for them.

When I began to write the descriptive portrayals of each teacher I was initially overwhelmed with the volume of data I had collected. As I selected certain experiences to include and left others out, I realized I was already interpreting at a first level. Through my initial interpretation the first teacher began to live again in my description. Even though the initial description was revised several times, I experienced real "joy" in portraying her life-world, hence the name "Joy" for my first teacher. After finishing the three teachers' portrayals, I struggled further to interpret and to allow the themes to emerge. I questioned and reflected on many of my own taken-for-granted perceptions of education, and I read what others had written on related topics. It was at this point I experienced real growth and a deepening understanding of what it is like to be a beginning teacher of young children.

Even now as I write the concluding pages of my study, I am in touch with these teachers as they become second year teachers. They have become a part of my professional and personal life. They have compelled me to question and reflect on many aspects of education. Each time I read through their experiences I am filled with new questions and new meanings. It has been a topic that enabled, nay forced me to grow both professionally and personally.

The Research Approach

The purpose of the present study was two-fold; first, to describe the experiences of three beginning teachers so others could relate to what it was like to be a new graduate just beginning to teach, and secondly; to explore the meaning each of the three teachers gave to this experience.

Planning the Study

If I were to come to a deeper understanding of the lived world of beginning teachers of young children, it seemed imperative that the teachers be allowed to reveal what it was actually like for them without trying to fit their experiences into a predetermined structure. Although it was exciting to approach the study completely open to what would emerge as important to each of the three teachers, it was also frightening for me to commence the study with so many questions unanswered. For instance, how long would the study continue, or exactly what was I looking for, or how frequently would I visit each teacher? I had tentative answers to some of these questions, but even those were continually open to inspection and possible change. As I searched through the literature on qualitative research, I came across statements like "remain in the field until your topic is saturated." Glasser and Strauss (1967) claimed that "themes will emerge from the data", and Suransky (1982b) urged me "to let the themes emerge. Don't try to tie them down too soon or you may overlook important aspects of the experience." This advice implied that if I truly wanted to find out what it was like for the beginning teacher, I could not predetermine how long the study would be nor could I state precisely what I was looking for as it was yet undisclosed.

Even though the openness of qualitative research procedures seemed uniquely appropriate for the study I wanted to pursue, I personally needed some assurance that my approach was credible. I found the ethnographic methods outlined by Werner and Rothe (1979), Wilson(1977), Spradley (1979, 1980), Filstead (1979), Wolcott (1975), Fetterman (1982), Bruyn (1966), Schatzman and Strauss (1973) and Homans (1966) provided helpful guidelines for approaching the field, developing rapport, collecting and recording data, and establishing validity. When doing an ethnographic study, Schatzman and Strauss (1973) recommend that the researcher "get close to the people in the study" in order to understand what they are experiencing. That approach seemed to address the first purpose of the study and provided rich data from which the researcher was able to develop, thick descriptive portrayals of each teacher's experiences. As the researcher "shared in the life activities and sentiments of the people, and became a normal part of the life and culture of the people" in the study (Bruyn, 1966), she felt able to portray the teacher's story the way she had experienced it. However, I was unable to find any research studies that had explored the meaning level of the first year teacher's experiences. Although a study of eighteen beginning teachers reported by Applegate (1977) indicated they had approached the study with "no predetermined questions" and used observations, interviews and anecdotal records to collect data, they had used the teachers' responses to develop categories and rating scales that might be useful to future research. Hawke's study of a first year teacher provided a rich descriptive portrayal of what that teacher had experienced and showed how a number of propositions were either supported or not by this teacher's experiences. Although both of these research projects used a similar approach to collect data, their analysis seemed to conclude with what the teachers had said and done. I hoped to delve more deeply into the meaning the teachers gave to their experiences. Often this required looking behind what was said and done and searching for the underlying meaning of those actions and words. It became my task to reveal what was not readily observable; to understand what was never said. This required a sensitivity to the teachers and to the situations they found themselves in. This required pulling together random bits of information and conversations that led to a more complete understanding of what the teacher was feeling and experiencing. This meant encouraging the teachers to look into themselves to discover what certain experiences really meant to them. I found it helpful to go to the literature and explore what similar experiences had meant to other people. Upon reflecting on the experiences of these three teachers and the offerings from literature, along with exploring the meaning of the experiences with colleagues, I uncovered new meanings and interpretations. Each new interpretation shed new light on the experiences and opened up further possibilities for interpretation. It is difficult to know when to stop, for each re-reading, each new article, each new discussion, results in my interpreting the teachers' experiences in a slightly new way.

Conducting the Study

In traditional educational research, the researcher would have made all decisions regarding approach, roles and termination prior to the commencement of the study. However, this was not so in the present study. Much of the success of the study rested on the ability of the researcher to establish rapport and a climate of trust. My first few weeks in the field were filled with tension as I struggled to develop empathy with the teachers and yet remain as neutral as possible so I would not distort the experience of a new teacher beginning to teach. While I found it difficult not to react positively to some of the exciting things that were happening, it was even more difficult not to respond when one teacher was experiencing difficulty and indirectly seeking help. Although establishing and maintaining rapport was quite readily achieved, I did have some early concerns over how formal/informal our meetings should be, how much of myself I needed to share with them if they were to feel comfortable sharing their inner-most thoughts with me, and at what point I should encourage them to reflect upon what they were doing and the meaning their experiences held for them.

Although it was sometimes uncomfortable not to have set answers to these questions, it was also refreshing to have the flexibility to change one's approach as the situation changed. For example I moved from once a week visits to a continuous week with each teacher just prior to Christmas. Even though this meant less frequent contact with two of the teachers, it did provide a more realistic portrayal of what the individual teachers were experiencing regularly. Likewise, I was able to maintain contact with the teachers throughout their entire first year when it appeared that this would provide a more balanced picture of a first year teacher's experiences, even though I initially expected to have completed data collection by February or March.

Writing Up the Study

In January I began to write up the descriptive portrayals of each of the teachers' observable experiences. While this was a first level of interpretation, my initial writing remained very objective as I recorded only what I had actually observed the teachers do or say. Through my reflecting on the experiences I had observed and the conversations I had been involved in with the teachers, my understanding of their experiences grew, as did my questions about the meaning they were giving these experiences. At this point I found it very helpful to go back to the teachers and further explore certain topics and questions with them. Although each teacher was encouraged to reflect on the experiences they were having, one in particular seemed to value our discussions as opportunities to reflect on what she was doing, the effect it was having on her children and how she might modify or change her interactions with them.

For the remainder of the school year I wrote and rewrote my descriptive portrayals; each time adding further interpretation and more recent experiences. As I searched for deeper meaning of the teacher's experiences, each reworking of my descriptions, combined with thought-provoking dialogues with my advisor and other educators, forced me to continuously re-examine my own assumptions about teaching. I came to a new understanding of control, help, and time, as I struggled to uncover what these meant to the teachers in the study.

As Glasser and Strauss (1967) and Suransky (1982b) had predicted, themes did emerge from the experiences of the teachers. Although many themes pervaded the life world of each teacher I chose to develop seven that seemed to hold particular significance to the teachers in this study. At first the themes were primarily a summary of significant events and feelings experienced by the teachers, but as I examined these activities and interactions for meaning, a dialectic developed between what had happened and what it meant. So although I started with the descriptions and explanations of the observable world, I was constantly searching for the underlying meaning. As hidden meanings were disclosed the observable events often took on new meanings that forced me to question my taken-for-granted assumptions and sometimes to adjust my thinking. An interesting example was the "pit stops" one principal had with each of his teachers. The teacher involved had seen these as a very positive, supportive activity. Initially I had too, but as I explored the meaning of help and support I began to question if these were truly supportive or whether they were primarily the principal's means of keeping tabs on his teachers and ensuring that the school ran smoothly. While these encounters were supportive to the teacher in the study, she was interacting with her children and colleagues in a manner of which the principal approved. Had she had an orientation or philosophy different from the principal's, would the pit stops have been his opportunity to *gently guide her to the "right" way of thinking*? In that case they might have been more threatening than helpful. In another school, the principal was very "warm, nurturing and supportive". Although I initially saw this as a very positive situation for a new teacher to be in, as the year progressed I began to question if a very nurturing supportive situation might in fact lead to a dependency on the part of a new teacher. So although this type of an environment may be highly desirble for new teachers, perhaps there is a fine line between just enough support that enables a new teacher to develop self-confidence in her own abilities, and too much support that results in the teacher developing a dependency on external motivation and rewards.

Through struggling to interpret what it was like for these three beginning teachers, I have come to a deeper understanding of not only what is involved in teaching, but in everyday interactions. So while the findings from these three unique experiences are not generalizable, I trust that others may find new meaning and insight revealed in what it is like to be a beginning teacher of young children.

C. Reflections on What the Study Meant to Me

As a Person

Right up to the moment of writing this section, I had been planning only to reflect on what the study had meant to me as a teacher educator. However, as I started to write, it seemed important to reflect first on what my involvement in this study has meant to me as a person. For, as Cunningham claims, it is the way I experience being in this world that is going to affect how I am as a teacher-educator. An important outcome of this study for me is that it has opened up new ways of looking at the world and the people in it. I feel I have grown in my ability to look beyond the observable everyday world and discern the underlying meaning of experiences. Never again will I be as ready as I once was to accept things as they initially appear to be. I trust I will be more diligent in my search for the obscure and constantly seek to uncover the hidden meaning.

In the past I have been enthusiastic about planning and carrying out new projects. I have also been aware of the need for reflection and evaluation, but I have never had much commitment to writing about these experiences. Although I feared I might find writing up this study real drudgery, I found it a most rewarding experience. I came to realize the role writing could play in helping me to reflect critically on what I had observed and recorded. In putting my ideas on paper, I was forced to clarify my thinking and to question my taken-for-granted assumptions. Once my ideas were in typewritten format, I felt less personal commitment to them and found it easier to evaluate and change what I had said. Although it was a constant challenge to write reflectively and in an engaging, understandable manner, I came to enjoy the process and found it pushed me to further clarity in my thinking.

I feel I have also grown in my understanding of people and their way of being in the world. As I explored the meaning of help, it became clear that so much of what people do with good intentions of helping is not really helpful. This has caused me to question not only how I can be helpful to education students, but how I can best help my four year old daughter, or my friend who is experiencing family discord.

As I pondered over the effect "clock time" had on the lives of the three teachers in the study, I also struggled to discover how I could experience time more authentically, and be less controlled by clock time demands. While some people would recommend time management workshops and courses, this only partially addresses the problem. If we merely learn to fit into our mechanized society more efficiently, we are not necessarily experiencing time more authentically. On the other hand, if we learn to use time more effectively, we should have more leisure or unbound time in which to experience life authentically and to respond to our internal time requirements rather than those imposed by external forces. As long as we "sell our time to a job" that values time as a commodity, we face a dilemma. Perhaps the best we can do it to ensure that we have a balance in our lives between bound and leisure time.

A theme that literally jumped out at me every time I went over my field notes was the significance for each teacher in the study of encounters in her own education with teachers who cared about her. "That was when I really learned; that was when I felt special; that's what I remember..." We often speak of a "caring person", but exactly what is meant? In my study it seemed that the "caring person" had taken a particular interest in the individual person, had made an effort to find out what was important to the individual and provided appropriate encouragement, guidance or whatever was most needed at the time. While this reinforced my belief that taking a personal interest in individual students is important, it underlined how crucial this caring is in all our every day encounters with other human beings. As Joy so aptly expressed "...unless you're interacting with people who seem to have an interest in you as a person, you don't really carry away anything that's lasting or going to affect your life."

This caring attention to individuals seemed to permeate many of the themes. For example, in the theme on help it became clear that the help that was most appreciated was when a person was sensitive to an individual's unique situation and able to offer encouragement, provide a break, suggest an alternative, or merely listen at the appropriate time.

As I reflected on the meaning of help, time and caring for the three teachers, I found myself continually questioning the meaning I gave to these concepts and how they affected my encounters with other people.

As a Teacher Educator

As a member of a Faculty of Education, it was an invaluable experience for me to have an opportunity to become part of three different schools and thus gain an understanding of current teacher concerns, community expectations and childrens' interests and problems. My involvement put me in touch with the reality of the teaching world in the eighties. While I could not experience the demands, frustrations and joys in exactly the same way the three teachers in the study did, I feel I was able to develop an empathy with, and understanding of, what they were experiencing. For instance, when Mel threw the chair across the room in response to my suggestion to wait for his turn, I am sure my feeling of helplessness was close to what Joy experienced in relation to his many unexplainable outbursts. I felt the excitement Patti experienced when her principal nominated her for the Edwin Parr Award, and sensed the depression Caroline was experiencing when she felt she was failing to provide a good learning experience for her grade fives.

Although each beginning teacher is unique and will experience her first year in a uniquely individual way, I did feel I had come to a better understanding of what it was like to be a beginning teacher of young children. I have attempted to share with others what it was like for the three teachers in my study through describing their experiences. I have tried to reveal what it meant for them through further interpretation and the development of seven themes. Now I shall reflect on the meaning each theme has for me as a teacher educator. In my present position I work primarily with undergraduate and graduate students who plan to teach young children. I am also involved in the supervision of student teachers and general curriculum courses for senior undergraduate elementary students. My comments relate specifically to actions I feel I can take within the early childhood component or else in specific courses I teach.

a) The beginning teacher as stranger: from student to teacher

While it is impossible to prepare students for each individual school situation, I do feel it is important for new teachers to consider themselves as a stranger to the school, and realize there are many taken-for-granted procedures and attitudes they need to become aware of. Often beginning teachers get so engrossed in working with "their class" that they tend to overlook their role as part of a school staff and begin to feel isolated. I suggest as teacher educators we have a responsibility to explore with our students their broader role and develop positive ways of approaching a new situation. For example we could discuss the importance of seeking out an ally that one could trust to share one's ups and downs and questions with.

There seemed to be a place for much closer liaison between University staff and their graduating students. The new teachers often took new ideas from University courses with them into their schools. At times these were not readily accepted by existing staff and the new teacher was left questioning their validity. If we, as teacher educators, are sincerely interested in our students as well as committed to promoting our ideas in the school system, we need to be more available to first year teachers. If they find themselves trying out a new idea in an alien territory, or questioning the existing practices, they know they can call on someone who at least shares the same perspective. If we developed more colleagiality among students in our courses we could encourage more networking among first year teachers so they could be of more support to each other. We could link senior undergraduate students with first year teachers with benefits to both. The fourth year student could gain a better understanding of the first year teacher's experiences while the latter would have an interested listener.

b) "I'm a real teacher at last!"

Becoming "a real teacher at last" was both exciting and traumatic. Now there were so many decisions to make, so many non-teaching tasks to be carried out, numerous people to interact with, and routines to establish. In student teaching many of these concerns had been taken care of by the "real" teacher. Somewhere within the four year Bachelor of Education program we need to give our students an opportunity to be real teachers. Part of the practicum experience could involve groups of students establishing summer programs where they take full responsibility for planning, setting up and running a program. They would be required to make the decisions, interact with the parents, establish the routines. For the teachers in this study, it was such experiences that gave them an assurance they could "handle the situation". If such a proposal was not deemed feasible, perhaps we should make this type of experience a prerequisite to entering, or graduating from, the Faculty of Education.

Through my involvement with these beginning teachers, I feel they were prepared to interact with children and plan curricular activities; however, there is so much more involved in teaching. They were required to interact with colleagues, with aides, with supervisors, with parents. They had to organize their overall program, work out balanced schedules, contend with committees, meetings and extra-curricular activities. They had to sort out professional and personal responsibilities and develop a reasonable balance in their own lives. Although it might be easy to dismiss all these activities as personal-people skills and not our responsibility, I suggest they are crucial to the success or failure of a beginning teacher. Perhaps to emphasize how important they are, we need to develop a

Department of Human Life Experiences where we focus on self-understanding, human relations, group dynamics, communication, life management skills, and overall personal fitness. Better still, we should incorporate these experiences into all of our existing departments and course offerings and truly transform teacher education.

c) Someone Cares

The message that came through to me here was how important it is to make a genuine effort to come to know each individual student in his or her uniqueness. While I realize one instructor cannot be everything to everyone, I am committed to making more time for personal encounters with individual and small groups of students, to find out what things are important in their lives and in what way I can help them in their becoming a teacher. I feel I can promote a caring atmosphere in my classes where students are encouraged to share, cooperate and develop a heightened awareness of each other as unique human beings. I trust that through experiencing a caring attitude, they in turn can provide a caring atmosphere for their pupils.

d) Struggle for control

As an educator, I believe there are many ways of effectively interacting with children and engaging them in meaningful learning experiences. I suggest teachers should be encouraged to develop a teaching style that is compatible with their beliefs and their strengths. However, if a beginning teacher expects to have this freedom to develop her own style and methods, she must be able to put forth a well-thought-through rationale backed with practical assurances that she can handle it. It is clearly our responsibility as teacher educators to ensure that each of our graduates is able to do this. Then they will be in a position to test out and defend their beliefs against other approaches, and not necessarily give in to the current norm. However, along with a sound theoretical and practical foundation, they also need to develop an appreciation for other perspectives.

Regarding the struggle for control within the classroom, I became more aware of subtle differences between external and internal control of children. Upon walking into each of the classrooms in January, I observed children busily engaged in a variety of activities. Most of the children were aware of limits and acceptable behavior and generally adhered to them. The underlying difference was that in one classroom, the rules for acceptable behavior had evolved jointly over the year and were based on doing or not doing certain things because the children felt it was disruptive or desirable, or unfair. Although in the other two classrooms the teachers had discussed with the children why certain behavior was acceptable or not acceptable, the limits were externally imposed by the teacher and the children adhered to them out of respect or love for their teacher. I think it is important to explore these differences in control with students so they can be more aware of how they are handling it in their classrooms. Do they expect their students to behave in a certain way to please the teacher, or do they want their students to behave in a certain way because it makes them feel good to respect others' rights or to work quietly at a problem?

e) Uncertainty can lead to distress

It would not be healthy to remove all stress from our lives, but too many changes and too much uncertainty led to distress for two of the teachers in the study. Although Joy experienced considerable uncertainty in the fall in her teaching responsibilities, she had a very supportive, stable home life and an inner strength which helped her deal with the many changes she was experiencing at school. On the other hand, as Caroline's teaching situation became most demanding, her personal life was in turmoil and her sense of self-worth was low which added further distress to her life. While there may be little we can do in preservice education to prepare teachers for all the change and uncertainty they may encounter in their first year, I feel some of the uncertainty could be overcome by more "real teacher" experiences and more focus on human life experiences.

Within the study of human life experiences, students could examine change and uncertainty as opportunities for constructive confrontations leading to new approaches and new solutions to problems. They could explore ways of developing inner resources that would enable them to meet the challenges and use them as an opportunity for growth. They need to understand that stress and uncertainty are part of human aliveness and should be seen as opportunities for growth.

f) They need help, but what is help?

I ended this theme with the following statement: "Perhaps help should be offered only if we take time to know and understand the person we are attempting to help. Then we may be less apt to interrupt the necessary struggle of becoming."

To me, as a teacher educator, this means that I need to know and understand the students I am attempting to"help". Much as I would urge my students to get to know individual children so they can plan activities that will stimulate them to grow and learn, I too need to do the same. As a faculty consultant I need to find out what my student teachers are aspiring to do and in what ways they feel they need support. I must however, remember that help is not necessarily making things easier for someone. In fact, to help someone become the teacher they are capable of being, my role might be to pose challenges, question procedures, all the while letting them know I am genuinely interested in their becoming the teacher they aspire to be.

Before beginning teachers can seek help, they must be able to realistically evaluate how they are doing and what their needs are. Self-evaluation may be one of the most important experiences we provide for education students. For although we can expose students to the many sources of help that may be available once they start teaching, these will be of little assistance to them unless they can clearly identify in what way they need help, along with a willingness to ask for it. The help the teachers in the study found most supportive was usually close at hand, such as a principal or another teacher who took a genuine interest in what they were doing and could offer help appropriate to the need. If new teachers are to benefit from this source of help, it is important that they view asking for help as a healthy sign of self-understanding and realistic self-appraisal, rather than as a sign of failure.

g) Experiencing time within the world of doing

The dilemma the teachers in the study experienced in relation to time is shared by many educators. One never stops being an educator. One's life becomes involved in the process. How can we ensure there is enough time for renewal in our lives that we will have the energy, vitality and understanding to inspire our students to become eager learners of life itself. Unfortunately we too often get caught up in the world of doing so many things that we have no time to experience life itself.

> The quality of being is more important than the quality of knowing; knowledge is a means of education, not its end. The final test of an education is what a man *is*, not what he knows.
>
> R. S. Barth, *The Open School*

As a Researcher

Now that I have formally completed my study, I am still left with many questions. I did come to a fuller understanding of what it is like to be a beginning teacher,and I did gain insight into the lived world of three new teachers. Inevitably, with each new understanding came further questions. The study of human meaning can never be complete. It must always remain open to further interpretation. Although I focused on the beginning teachers' perspective, what about understanding the principal's perspective? What about the parents? the children? or other staff? How would understanding their perspectives illuminate understanding of these three teachers?

Each time I reflect upon the experiences of these three teachers, new meanings emerge. What further meaning could I dis-cover? Each article I read, each discussion I have with the teachers or with colleagues reveals further insight into the meaning of the themes developed. Through delving deeper into the themes of caring, helping, uncertainty and the others, it may be possible to disclose deeper essential understandings of new teachers as human beings. I identified and chose to develop seven themes, yet there might have been seven more. For example, I can now see emergent another theme "striving for perfection" based on the meaning each of the teachers gave. I can explore guided by the question, "What is the essence of striving for these teachers or, for that matter, for anyone? And so likely I can go on as horizons enlarge and deepen for me.

Now as I sense the meaning to beginning teachers of what it is like to be beginning teachers, I am tempted to ask as these teachers begin their second year of teaching, what meaning they will give to this experience? For them, will their first year take on a new or different meaning as they experience the beginning of school for a second time? What new meaning might they give to their first year concerns and questions?

Too, although I focused on the beginning teacher of young children. I keep wondering what meaning a beginning high school teacher, a beginning nurse or a person beginning any new pursuit might give to their experiences. I now ask, "What does beginning mean?"

Indeed, this study has helped in opening a new horizon and a new approach for me to explore and to understand. I feel I have just begun.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aoki, Ted (ed). *Curriculum Evaluation in a New Key*. Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, The University of British Columbia, 1978.

Aoki, Ted."Towards a Dialectic Between the Conceptual World and the Lived World: Transcending Instrumentalism in Curriculum Orientation." A paper presented at a Teacher Education Seminar in South Korea, 1982.

Applegate, Jane. "The First Year Techers' Changing Perceptions." A paper presented at the American Education Research Association in New York, 1977.

Barritt, L., A. J. Beekman, H. Bleeker, K. Mulderij. *Meaningful Educational Research: A descriptive Phenomenological Approach*. Unpublished manuscript, 1979.

Battersby, David. "The Use of Ethnography and Grounded Theory in Educational Research." *McGillJournal of Education*, 1981, XVI, (1), 91-98.

Becker, Howard and B. Geer, "Participant Observation and Interviewing: A Comparison" in McCall, G. and Simmons, J. (eds) *Issues in Participant Observation*. New York: Addison-Wesley, 1969.

Beekman, Ton. Personal communication, 1982.

Berman, Louise and J. A. Roderick. *Curriculum: Teaching the What, How and Why of Living.* Columbus:Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co., 1977.

Bond, G. W. and G. Smith. "The First Year of Teaching" *The National Elementary Principal*, 1967, 47, 55-59.

Boyce, Ted. *Teacher-Staff Perspective of Curriculum Change.* Dissertation proposal, University of Alberta, 1981.

Brimfield, R.M.B., J. Roderick and K. Yamamoto. "Persons as Researchers: Observations of the Participants," *Curriculum Inquiry*, 1983, 13(1), 5-21.

Bruyn, S. *Human Perspective in Sociology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

Buber, Martin. "Between Man and Man," in Greene, M. *Existential Encounters for Teachers*. New York: Random House, 1967.

Buscaglio, Leo. *Love*. New York: Fawcett Crest, 1972.

Buscaglio, Leo. *Living, Loving and Learning*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1982.

Castle, Kathryn, et al. *Bridging the Gap: The Beginning Years.* Okalhoma State University, 1980.

Coles, Robert. *Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964.

Collins, Mildred. *Students Into Teachers: Experiences of Probationers in Schools*. London:Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

Combs, A., D. Avila and W. W. Purkey, *Helping Relationships.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1973.

Corcoran, Ellen."Transition Shock: The Beginning Teacher's Paradox," *Journal of Teacher Education*, 1981, xxxii, 3, 19-23.

Cottrell, Diane. *The Teaching Experience: Portraits of Enthusiastic Successful English*

Teachers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1982.

Cunningham, B. A. *Teaching as Being: The Right to Personhood*. Occasional Paper No. 6., Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta, 1979.

Denton, D. E. "That Mode of Being Called Teaching, " in Denton, D. E. (ed) *Existentialism and Phenomenology in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1974.

Denzin, Norman K. *The Research Act, A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970.

Duignan, Patrick. "Ethnography: An Adventure in Interpretive Research." *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 1981, XXVII, (3), 285-297.

Eddy, Elizabeth. *Becoming a Teacher, The Passage to Professional Status*. Columbia University: Teachers' College, 1969.

Edelman, Murray. "The Political Language of the Helping Professions", in *Politics and Society*, 1975.

Edmonds, E. L., and F. Bessal. *First Class: A Survey of Canadian Teachers in their First Year of Service*. Project Report, 1979.

Evans, E. *Transition to Teaching*. New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Felder, B. Dell, et al. "Problems and Perspectives of Beginning Teachers: A Follow-Up Study." 1979, Eric document ED201595.

Ferguson, Marilyn. *The Aquarian Conspiracy*. Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, Inc., 1980.

Fetterman, David. "Ethnography in Educational Research: The Dynamics of Diffusion." Educational Researcher, 1982, 17-22.

Field, Peggy-Anne. *An Ethnography: Four Nurses' Perceptives of Nursing in a Community Health Setting*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, 1980.

Filstead, W. "Qualitative Methods. A Needed Perspective in Evaluation Research" in T. Cook and C. Reichardt (eds) *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research*. London: Sage Publications, 1979, 33-48.

Fuller, F. and O. Brown. "Becoming a Teacher, " in Ryan, K. (ed) *Teacher Education*, The Seventy-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 1975.

Geer, Blanche. "First Days in the Field." in P. E. Hammond (ed) *Sociologists at Work*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1964, 322-344.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers, 1973.

Glaser, B. and A. Strauss. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967.

Government of Alberta, *Operational Plans for Early Childhood Services*. 1973.

Greene, Maxine (ed). *Existential Encounters for Teachers*. New York: Random House, 1967.

Greene, Maxine. *Teacher as Stranger*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1973.

Grumet, Madeleine. "Conception, Contradiction and Curriculum" in *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*. 1981.

Hawke, D. *The Life World of a Beginning Teacher of Art*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, 1980.

Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977.

Henry, Jules. *Pathways to Madness*. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

Homans, G. C. *The Nature of Social Science*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967.

Horowitz, M. "Teacher Education: Souffle de fromages ou cheese omelet?" In Myers, D. and Reid, F. (eds) *Educating Teachers: Critiques and Proposals*. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1974.

Hoy, Wayne. "The Influence of Experience on the Beginning Teacher" *The School Review*, 1968, 76(3), 312-323.

Jackson, Philip W. *Life in Classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968.

Katz, Lilian. *Talks with Teachers*. Washington: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977.

Lacey, C. *The Socialization of Teachers*. London: Methuen, 1977.

LaPierre, L. L. (Commissioner). *To Herald a Child: The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child*. Toronto: Ontario Public School Men Teachers' Federation, 1980.

Kockelmans, J.J. *Edmund Hassert's Phenomenological Psychology*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 1967.

Lewis, Oscar. *The Childrenof Sanchez, Autobiography of a Mexican Family*. New York: Random House, 1961.

Lortie, Dan. *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

MacGregor, R. N. and D. M. Hawke. "Ethnographic Method and its Application to a School Art Setting," *Visual Arts Research*. 1982, 16, 38-45.

Montague, A."My Idea of Education," *Today's Education*, 1980, 69, 48-49.

Nash, Dennison. "The Ethnologist as Stranger: An Essay in the Sociology of Knowledge", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 1963, XIX, 149-167.

Natanson, Maurice (ed.) *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*. New York: Random House, 1963.

National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards. *The Real World of the Beginning Techer*, Report of 19th National TEPS Conference, 1965.

Newberry, Janet McIntosh, "The Barrier Between Beginning and Experienced Teacher, " *The Journal of Educational Administration*. 1978, 16, 46-56.

Oldham, Valerie Ann. *Interpretations of Difficulty in High School Biology*. unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Alberta, 1982.

Pagano, JoAnne. "The Nature and Sources of Teacher Authority". Unpublished manuscript, 1982.

Palmer, Richard E. *Hermeneutics.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969.

Patton, Michael Quinn. *Alternative Evaluation Research Paradigm.* Grand Forks, N. D.: University of North Dakota, 1975.

Pataniczek, Dennis and N. S. Isaacson, "The Relationship of Socialization and the Concerns of Beginning Secondary Teachers," *Journal of Teacher Education* 1981, XXXII (3) 14-17.

Phenix, Phili "Unamuno on Love and Pedagogy" in Denton, D. (ed) *Existentialism and Phenomenology in Education.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1974.

Psathas, George (ed). *Phenomenological Sociology Issues and Applications.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973.

Reagan, Ronald. Cited in *Time*, June 1983.

Reichardt, C. and T. Cook."Beyond Qualitative Versus Quantitative Methods," in T. Cook and C. Reichardt (eds) *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research.* Beverley Hills: Sage Publications, 1979.

Rist, Ray."Blitzkrieg Ethnography: On the Transformation of a Method into a Movement," *Educational Researcher.* 1980, 8-10.

Roderick, Jessie."Describing Persons in Settings: Making the Affective Explicit," in L. Berman and J. Roderick (eds.) *Feeling, Valuing and the Art of Growing: Insights into the Affective.* Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1977.

Rosenthal, R. and L. Jacobson."Pygmalion in the Classroom," in Goodell, C. (ed.) *The Changing Classroom.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1973.

Rothe, Peter. "Existential Phenomenology as a Dimension of Evaluation." in T. Aoki (ed), *Curriculum Evaluation in a New Key.* Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, U. B. C., 1978, 25-41.

Rothman, E.R. *Troubled Teachers.* New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1977.

Ryan, Kevin(ed). *Don't Smile Until Christmas.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Ryan, K., K. Newman, G. Mager, J. Applegate, T. Lasky, R. Flora, and J. Johnson. *Biting the Apple: Accounts of First Year Teachers.* New York: Longman Inc., 1980.

Schatzman, Leonard and A. L. Strauss. *Field Research: Strategies for a Natural Sociology.* Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.

Schutz, Alfred. *On Phenomenology and Social Relations.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Schutz, Alfred."The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology," in Brodersen, Arvid (ed.) *Collected Papers II. Studies in Social Theory.* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971.

Selye, Hans. *Stress Without Distress.* New York: Lippincott and Crowell Publishers, 1974.

Shapiro, Alan. *Toward the Life of Dialogue: Exploring the Meaning of Partnership in Teacher Education.* A dissertation proposal, University of Alberta, 1981.

Simmel, G. "The Stranger" in Wolff, K. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: The Free Press, 1950.

Simons, George. *Keeping your Personal Journal*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

Smith, Louis. "An Evolving Logic of Participant Obsevation, Educational Ethnography and Other Case Studies. *Review of Research in Education*, 1979, 6, 316-377.

Smith, Louis and W. Geoffrey. *The Complexities of an Urban Classroom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968.

Southwell, John L. "Teacher Aids Teacher, Beginners Prefer Help from their Experienced Colleagues, " *Clearing House*. 1970, 45, 104-106.

Spradley, James. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1979.

Spradley, James. *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

Stake, Robert, "The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry," *Educational Researcher*. 1978, 7(2), 5-7.

Strasser, Stephan. *Phenomenology and the Human Sciences*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1963.

Suransky, Valerie. *The Erosion of Childhood*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982a.

Suransky, Valerie. Personal communication, 1982b.

Taylor, Marlene. *Student Thought and Responses to Music*. Dissertation proposal, University of Alberta, 1982.

Tisher, Richard. "Teacher Induction: An Aspect of the Education and Professional Development of Teachers", 1979.

Troutner, Leroy. "Time and Education, " in Denton, D. E. (ed.) *Existentialism and Phenomenology in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1974.

Van Manen, Max. "An Exploration of Alternative Research Orientations in Social Education," *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 1975, 3(1), 1-28.

Vandenberg, D. *Being and Education*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Vaughn, Joseph. Cited in Castle, K."What Research Says About Success During the Beginning Years of Teaching," 1980. Eric Document ED 201606.

Wax, Rosalie. *Doing Fieldwork, Warnings and Advice*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Welch, I. D., D. C. Medeiros and G. Tate. *Beyond Burnout*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982.

Werner, Walter. *Evaluation: Sense Making of School Programs*. Occasional Paper No. 1, Edmonton: Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta, 1979.

Werner, Walter and P. Rothe. *Doing School Ethnography*. Edmonton: Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta, 1979.

Williams, T.R. *Field Methods in the Study of Culture*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

Wilson, Stephen. "The Use of Ethnographic Techniques in Educational Research," *Review of Educational Research*, 1977, 47 (1), 245-265.

Wolcott, H. "Criteria for Ethnographic Approach to Research in Schools", *Human Organization*, 1975, 34(2), 111-127.

Wright, B. D. and S. A. Tuska, "From Dream to Life in the Psychology of Becoming a Teacher," *The School Review*, 1968, 76 (3), 253-293.

Yamamoto, Kaoru (ed). *The Child and His Image*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972.

Zahork, John, "Using Insights in Education." *Journal of Teacher Education*, 1981, 32(2), 10-13.